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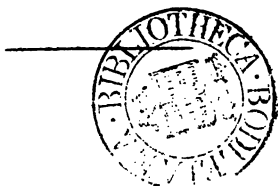




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CONVERSATIONS

ON

MYTHOLOGY.



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CONVERSATIONS
ON
MYTHOLOGY.

CONVERSATION I.

MYTHOLOGY OF THE EGYPTIANS.

MOTHER.

I THINK, my dear Harriet, that I have lately observed in you a desire to become acquainted with the Mythology of the Ancients; and as you will find a tolerably clear idea of the subject always useful, and even essential to the right understanding of poetry, it occurs to me, that we cannot do better, than devote a few hours every evening to this amusing study.

HARRIET.

O yes, my dear mother, I am quite delighted with the plan, and I hope soon, with your kind

assistance, to know more of those imaginary beings, which have so often charmed my fancy.

MOTHER.

Well, I see no reason why we should not avail ourselves of the present moment. The word *Mythology* is derived from the Greek, and means a system of fables, or the fabulous history of the Gods of the heathen world. Men were first led into idolatry, or the worship of false gods, through folly and vain-glory, which withheld them from paying due honour to the Almighty, and often prompted them to raise those mortals to the rank of divinities who were distinguished by any moral or personal excellence: sordid flattery also made subjects adore their princes, and an immoderate love of immortality induced some men to leave behind them images of themselves, which were afterwards rendered objects of religious veneration. Idolatry existed in a very early period of the world; in the time of Moses it had attained a great height, and several of the ceremonies of the Jews seem to have been intended to preserve them from those idolatrous rites with which they had become familiarized by dwelling in Egypt.

HARRIET.

Is the *Mythology* of the more ancient nations at all interesting?

MOTHER.

Though this branch of Heathen *Mythology* is

deficient in those poetical embellishments which give such a charm to that of the Greeks, still it is not devoid of interest. There is one point of view, at least, and that an important one, in which the account of these superstitions may be considered with advantage; for in several instances traditions are to be found, which appear to have been originally derived from our sacred history. This cannot fail to strike every reflecting mind, and a countryman of our own, Sir William Jones, who had devoted much of his time to oriental researches, was so deeply impressed with these coincidences, in the Hindú religion, that from having, early in life, entertained doubts of the truth of revelation, he became a perfect convert to its sacred doctrines.

HARRIET.

This, certainly, is very remarkable, and what you have already said has awakened in me a curiosity I never before felt on the subject.

MOTHER.

The antiquity of the Egyptian Mythology is so great, that the Greeks are said to have borrowed from it, not only their religious ceremonies, but most of their gods themselves; for though it is probable that the Egyptians, at first, believed in one supreme Deity, the creator and governor of all things, they very soon made the sun and moon, under various forms, the objects of their adoration;

and animals, and even inanimate substances, were also worshipped by them.

Their principal divinities were Osiris and Isis. Osiris, the chief deity, was considered and worshipped as a personification of the sun. By some writers, he has been regarded as a deification of an illustrious prince, who reigned at a very early period of the world; but the opinions of the ancients concerning him vary so much, that we need not view him in any other light than that already mentioned. Osiris was represented under different forms, sometimes as a man sailing in a ship on the ocean, supported by a crocodile or floating on a lotus, sometimes as a serpent, and sometimes as an eye, which was expressive of his power and providence, and frequently as a hawk, to signify his piercing sight and rapidity of motion; but the greatest adoration was paid to his living image, the ox, Apis. Under this form, magnificent temples were erected to him whilst living, and extraordinary honours paid to his memory when dead. We are told that all the people of Egypt went into mourning at his death, and that his obsequies were solemnized with a pomp scarcely credible.

HARRIET.

Perhaps the Israelites took the idea of their golden calf from the god Apis, during their abode in Egypt.

MOTHER.

We have every reason to suppose they did, and several other idols, which they worshipped in the land of Judea, are to be traced to the same source.

The goddess Isis was the consort of Osiris, and her symbol was a cow. She was regarded as a personification of the moon, and as such was highly venerated. She was considered as the goddess of abundance; and the fertility of Egypt, occasioned by the inundation of the Nile, was attributed to her as well as to Osiris. Isis is represented as a woman holding a globe in one hand, and a vessel filled with ears of corn in the other. Temples were erected to her honour, festivals held in her praise, and priests appointed for her service, from whom the greatest strictness of life and manners was exacted. They were required to walk bare-foot, and to pass the night in continual acts of devotion, near the statue of the goddess.

HARRIET.

I think I have read that Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, was once so ambitious as to be called a second Isis, and that, not content with the homage she received as a fair mortal, she was accustomed to dress herself like that goddess.

MOTHER.

I know that such a story is related, and were it

not well authenticated, one could scarcely believe any thing so extravagant.

Typhon was the third divinity of the Egyptians. He was worshipped as the author of all evil, in opposition to his brother Osiris, the author of all good, with whom he is said to have waged perpetual war. Typhon was accused of having introduced anarchy and confusion into the world, and was hence suitably represented as a tremendous monster; his bulk was terrific, he had several heads, wings on his shoulders, and his legs terminated in the coils of two enormous serpents. He compelled all the inferior deities to take refuge in Egypt, where they assumed the forms of different animals, which were afterwards held sacred on that account.

There are but four other Egyptian deities to which I shall direct your attention; Horus or Orus, Anubis, Serapis, and Harpocrates, but there were many others better known as Grecian deities, such as Mercury, Jupiter Ammon, and Juno.

HARRIET.

This list is not so formidable as I had expected, and when you have explained the attributes of each, it will not be difficult to recollect them.

MOTHER.

Horus, the first on the list, was like Osiris, the emblem of the sun, and was held in such veneration

by the Egyptians, that three of their cities were called by his name. He was supposed to be the son of Osiris and Isis, and was generally represented as a child. He was regarded as the supreme lord and regulator of Time, for which reason the star of day was sometimes used as his emblem.

Anubis, was the brother, and faithful companion of Osiris and Isis, and was represented as a man with a dog's head, holding a branch in one hand. Temples and priests were consecrated to him, and his image was carried in all religious processions.

Serapis, was worshipped under various names, and was a tutelary god of Egypt in general, and the patron of its principal cities. There seems to have been much confusion in the accounts given of this divinity, and some writers suppose him to be the same as Osiris. Magnificent temples were erected to him ; and one at Alexandria exceeded in splendour almost all the other temples of that age. The worship of Serapis was introduced at Rome by the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in the year 146 of the Christian era, but his worship was accompanied with so many objectionable ceremonies that the senate were obliged soon after to abolish it. Before the introduction of Serapis among their gods, the Egyptians never offered sacrifices of animals, but worshipped their deities by prayer and incense only. By the example of Ptolemy and his court, this divinity became so great a

favourite, as to make them forsake almost all their other gods.

We now come to Harpocrates, the god of Silence, and the son of Isis. He was represented as a boy crowned with an Egyptian mitre, and holding one of his fingers on his mouth, emblematical of his character. The Romans placed his statue at the entrance of their temples, and the Egyptians offered to him the first fruits of lentiles and pulse.

I must say a few words about the priests and philosophers of Egypt, who shone with peculiar lustre in the early period of Egyptian history. In that country, priests were considered as nearly equal in rank to kings; great privileges and revenues were granted to them, and their lands were exempt from all imposts. Some traces of these privileges are to be found in the book of Genesis, where we read that Joseph "made it a law in the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should have a fifth *part* (of the harvest), except in the land of the priests only, *which* became not Pharaoh's."* They were at one time the depositaries of religion and the sciences, and were consulted alike upon subjects relating to the mysteries of religion, and questions of philosophy. Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher, owed his favourite doctrine of the transmigration of souls,

* Genesis, chap. xlvii. v. 26.

to the Egyptian priests, who taught, that at the death of men, their souls passed into other living bodies ; if they had been wicked they were imprisoned in the bodies of unclean, and unhappy animals, to expiate in them their past transgressions, but after a revolution of some centuries, they again animated other human bodies.

Amongst the Egyptian philosophers, the two Hermes, or Mercuries, who filled Egypt with their wonderful inventions, deserve to be remembered.

The first Hermes invented, or compiled, their system of Mythology.

The second Hermes, surnamed Trismegistus, represented the emotions of the soul, by the figures of animals, insects, plants, and stars, with many other symbolical characters, concealing the mysteries of religion under hieroglyphics and allegories ; whence arose the figures of cows, oxen, dogs, cats, crocodiles, and smaller reptiles, held sacred by the Egyptians, which are now found engraven on the walls of temples and obelisks, and which have so long puzzled many learned men to decypher.

any of the ancient heathens, they appear to have been the best fitted to receive the first knowledge of his Son.

The principal deities in the Persian Mythology, as described by Zoroaster, were Ormuzd, or Orosmales, or Oromazes, for these names all designate the same being; Mithras, and Ahriman, or Aramianus.

Ormuzd was adored by them as the author and principle of all good. He is described by Zoroaster as residing in the midst of a pure and divine fire; and the ancient Persians considered it profane to form images of him, or to erect temples to his honor with the idea of making them his dwelling place. Fire was venerated as his sacred emblem, the sun as his image, and his worship consisted in simple rites, and bloodless sacrifices.

Mithras was also supposed to have been a personification of the sun, and the first production of the power of Orosmales. He was considered as a very benevolent spirit, and was represented as seated next the throne of Orosmales, surrounded by an infinite number of genii, of different ranks and orders; he was held in high veneration by the Persians; and mysteries, called by his name, were celebrated in deep caverns or artificial grottos in the mountains of Persia, hence called the Mithratic caves. The worship of this deity was introduced at Rome about 607 years after the building of that

city. His symbols were the bull, the serpent, a globe, and a pair of united wings.

Aramanius was considered as the author and spirit of evil among the Persians. He is represented by Zoroaster as the chief of the Gynges, the highest rank of genii; and it is said that, having aspired to equal the god Mithras, he seduced all the spirits of his order to unite with him in disturbing the harmony of the heavenly regions. He was believed to be perpetually opposed to Orosmales, and to have endeavoured to introduce universal confusion amongst his works. Orosmales, to punish these rebellious spirits, withdrew his rays, and thus the sphere of Ahriman became a chaos of eternal night, in which anarchy and violence reigned. But at length, by the power and compassion of Orosmales, the planets arose, into which the seven principal genii, the companions and ministers of Ahriman, were distributed, and the merciful god Mithras, the mediator between Orosmales and Ahriman, is represented as labouring unceasingly to reclaim and purify these adverse spirits, and thus to render them capable of again enjoying their primitive felicity. In the midst of these wild notions, adopted by the Persians, a belief seems to have been entertained, that the spirit of evil, in the form of a serpent, destroyed the first of the human race, and also that the earth had been overwhelmed by an universal deluge.

HARRIET.

What a striking analogy this part of the Persian Mythology seems to bear to our sacred history?

MOTHER.

Yes, it is impossible not to be impressed with it; for whilst in Ahriman we view the great enemy of mankind, in Mithras we behold a faint image of that merciful being whom, as Christians, we are taught to love and reverence.

The reformed religion of Persia, you must remember, continued in force until that unhappy country was subdued by the Mussulmans, who, wherever they went, established their religion by the power of the sword; and Mahometanism has ever since prevailed in Persia, though there are some who still preserve their ancient faith, and are called Parsees, or Guebres.

HARRIET.

Hearing of the Guebres reminds me of Moore's lines in the fire worshippers in Lalla Rookh.

MOTHER.

I do not recollect the passage you allude to, but if you can repeat it, I shall be very glad to hear it.

HARRIET.

" Is Iran's pride then gone for ever,
Quench'd with the flame in Mithras' caves?
No; she has sons, that never, never,
Will stoop to be the Moslem's slaves,
While heaven has light, or earth has graves.

Spirits of fire, that brood not long,
But flash resentment back for wrong ;
And hearts where, slow but deep the seeds
Of vengeance ripen into deeds ;
Till, in some treacherous hour of calm,
They burst like Zeilam's giant palm,
Whose buds fly open with a sound
That shakes the pigmy forests round."

CONVERSATION III.

MYTHOLOGY OF THE HINDÚS.

MOTHER.

AND now, my dear Harriet, if you are ready, we will take a general view of the leading characteristics of the Mythology of the Hindús, which is a mixture of sublime truths, wild fictions, and the most degrading superstitions. While the Hindús worship a multitude of inferior divinities, for the calendar of their gods is almost endless, they have ever been taught to acknowledge one Supreme Being, whom they call Brahma, or the Great One. This deity, uniting in himself the three distinct characters of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, is worshipped under each. When he is considered as the Creator, his name is Brahma; when viewed in the light of the Destroyer, he is called Seeva, Sieva, Juggernaut, or Mahadeoa; and in the character of Preserver he is styled Vishnú.—Vishnú is supposed to be the chief manifestation of the power of Brahma; the whole order of nature is said to be preserved by him, and the Hindús believe that under different names, such as Rama, Chrishnú, and Buddha, he has visited this earth for some benevolent purpose.

Buddha is said to have appeared about a thousand years before the Christian era, for the purpose of abolishing human sacrifices, and substituting the innocent oblation of fruits and flowers ; and he is expected to appear once more in the form of a horse, to put an end to all things.

HARRIET.

I have read that the Hindús, as well as the ancient Persians, paid great adoration to the sun, and that the remains of very magnificent temples are to be found in some parts of India, dedicated to that luminary.

MOTHER.

The sun appears to have been the object of idolatry there, as well as among other ancient nations. The moon was likewise adored by the Hindús, and was worshipped as a male deity under the name of Chinchá, who is described by the Indian poets as sitting in a splendid chariot drawn by two antelopes, and holding a rabbit in his right hand. In some parts of India, fountains are dedicated to this divinity.

Some Hindús still adore the sun under the name of *Surya*, and the sect which is peculiarly addicted to this mode of worship is known by the name of *Saura*.

The account given by some early travellers in India, of the splendour of several of the ancient temples of the sun, is scarcely credible.

HARRIET.

I recollect meeting with a description of some of them not long ago. One temple was mentioned particularly, where the walls were of marble streaked with gold; and an image of the sun represented on the pavement was so dazzlingly bright, from the profusion of precious stones of which the rays were composed, that it was scarcely possible to look at it.

MOTHER.

There are several interesting ruins of ancient temples in different parts of India. One at Elephanta, near Bombay, is very remarkable; it takes its name from the figure of an elephant cut in the solid rock, of which it is composed; but of all modern Hindú temples, that at Juggernaut is the most celebrated. Juggernaut, I have already told you, is another name for Seeva, or the Destroyer, and his worship consists of the most degrading and cruel rites. Before an image of this merciless deity, which is paraded on a lofty and heavy car, numbers of poor deluded creatures throw themselves on the ground, where, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, they are crushed to death by its ponderous wheels. The pilgrims who resort to Juggernaut are innumerable, and a tax levied upon each by a Mahomedan prince of the country, is said to have amounted in one year to seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds; Juggernaut is the residence of the chief Brahmin

of India. The Brahmins are the highest class or caste of Hindús, and are also the priests, and some of them are very learned men. Their principal study is the Sanscrit or sacred language, in which the Hindú books of religion, called the Vedas, are written, but which has long ceased to be spoken: they exercise a great degree of temperance and self-denial, and are enjoined to abstain from animal food, and every kind of fermented liquor.

HARRIET.

Is their belief in the transmigration of souls the cause of their abstaining from animal food, for I think I have been told that not only the Brahmins but all the Indians are equally scrupulous on this point?

MOTHER.

That is no doubt a powerful motive, but the general habits of the Indians are very temperate.

HARRIET.

I should like to hear a little more of the castes of the Hindús.

MOTHER.

There are but four hereditary divisions of the people, which were established in the earliest times by sacred laws. They consist of the Brahmins; the Military; the Agriculturalists; and the Traders, Labourers, and Mechanics. The greatest distinction exists between these different classes, who have

as little communication with each other as if they belonged to another race of beings. Those of the superior castes cannot join in any common occupations, and hold the inferior in the utmost contempt; and one of the greatest punishments that can be inflicted upon a Hindú is the loss of caste, which degrades him to the most wretched condition, for by it he is cut off from all the comforts of society, and is even regarded as a detestable animal.

HARRIET.

This system of castes must be a sad impediment to any improvement in the manners of the Hindús, by making them tenacious of their old habits and customs.

MOTHER.

A very great one certainly; yet, accounts have lately been received of the conversion of one of the principal Brahmins to Christianity, which may be productive of unspeakable success to the cause of religion in India. It is, indeed, very painful to consider, that such superstitions should still exist in so large a portion of the world, and we cannot but hope, that in time the blessings of Christianity may enlighten the minds of these people.

Besides the sacrifice of human lives which are willingly offered at the temple of Juggernaut, the poor Hindús are taught to consider it as merito-

rious to endure the greatest bodily tortures. They sometimes wear collars about their necks, with spikes in them; sometimes they remain for a length of time in the most painful attitudes; but what is more dreadful than all, is the custom of burning widows on the funeral pile with the bodies of their husbands, the accounts of which are too shocking to reflect upon.

HARRIET.

But is it possible that the Brahmins, whom you have described as being learned, can encourage sacrifices, which seem so opposite to the purpose of Vishnu's appearance upon earth?

MOTHER.

Yes, my love; and they not only encourage this horrible practice, but insist that the Vedas enjoin the sacrifice of human beings on particular occasions; and while this is the case, any interference on the part of our government in India can avail but little.

You may find the list of the most remarkable of the inferior divinities of the Hindús, which I am going to give you, useful to refer to occasionally; particularly as many of them will appear under other names in the Mythology of the Greeks.

1. Casyapa, the ancient god of the heavens.
2. Ganeza or Polleaz, the god of wisdom, who

is represented with an elephant's head. All sacrifices and religious ceremonies, serious writings and affairs of moment are begun, by pious Hindús, with an invocation to Ganeza. His image is set up in their streets, and against the walls of their temples; and is sprinkled every day with oil, and adorned with flowers.

3. Lachsmee, the goddess of abundance, who presides over agriculture, is the wife of Vishnu; and is represented with a twisted cord under her arm, something like the cornucopia of the Grecian Ceres.

4. Indra, is the king or god of good spirits, supposed to be the master of thunder, and the ruler of showers.

5. Seshanaga, the sovereign of the infernal regions, and the king of serpents.

6. Yama or Yamen, the god of death; he is called also the king of justice, being considered by the Hindús as the judge of departed souls; for they believe, that as soon as a soul leaves its body it is conveyed to Yamapur, or the city of Yama, where it receives its just sentence from him, and thence either ascends to Swenga, or the first heaven; is driven down to Narac, the region of serpents; or assumes on earth the form of some animal, unless its offence had been so heinous as to merit a vegetable, or even a mineral prison.

7. Seraswatti, the wife of Brahma, is the emblem

of creative power, and the patroness of arts and sciences.

8. Cama, the god of love, is represented as having a bow of cane, and shafts enwreathed with flowers.

9. Surádevi, the goddess of wine.

10. Agnyastra, the fabricator of lightning.

11. Pavan, the ruler of the winds.

12. Varuna, the genius of the waters.

13. Agni, the genius of fire.

14. Menni or Satyavrata, means the lawgiver. There were several of this name, and the history of one bears a strong resemblance to that of Noah.

15. Mariatale, the goddess of the Parias, the lowest caste of Hindús.

Besides these gods, the Hindús worship the ox, the cow, and some other animals, as well as the Ganges and other rivers.

I should like now to tell you something of the Buddhic or Thothic superstitions, which resemble those of the Hindús in some points. The two great sects, the Brahminical or Osiric, and the Thothic, may be distinctly traced to the remotest antiquity. The Osiric or Brahminical sect may be considered as the source of the Egyptian, Persian, and Grecian mythologies; and the Buddhic as the parent of the Scythian, and other systems which extend from the north of Tartary to Ceylon, including China, the Birman empire, the eastern

peninsula of India, with numberless islands to the south of it, most of the countries east of the Ganges, and Tibet, where the grand Lama resides, who is the chief priest of the Buddhic religion. I dare say you have heard of the Lama; he is supposed to be immortal, and his soul is believed to transmigrate at his successive deaths into the body of an infant.

HARRIET.

This is a more wild and extravagant notion than any I have yet heard of.

MOTHER.

And yet, when we reflect on the extravagancies which have been witnessed even in our own country, we cannot be surprised at the strange opinions entertained by those nations which have existed so long in heathen ignorance. — But to return to our subject, Buddha, or Boodha, we are told, is the name given by the inhabitants of the countries I have mentioned, to their supreme God. He is supposed to be the same as the Vishnu of the Hindús, and at the solicitation of some of the other deities he is believed to have, under human forms, appeared repeatedly on earth, where he practised every possible virtue, and exhibited the greatest example of self-denial and piety. After the last of these manifestations, he is said to have ascended to the hall of glory named Mookze, where he

remains in happiness, and incorruptibility, while his doctrine will continue in splendour five thousand years.

Another Buddha is expected to appear after an infinite number of ages, when the universe will be destroyed, and a new order of things is to take place. Buddha is not represented as purely a spirit, but as having gigantic human dimensions, and many of the attributes of humanity. Images of this deity are represented as either standing erect, sitting with the legs crossed, or lying on the right side; always of a yellow colour, and, like most of the statues of Indian gods, highly ornamented. His temples are generally rocky caves enlarged by art and decorated with the figures of other divinities; and on the outside, monuments in the shape of cupolas, supposed to contain some particles of the bones of Buddha, are placed on pedestals. His priests are forbidden to marry; and extreme abstinence, like that of the Brahmins, is required of them. Their business is to keep the temples of their god in order, to preserve their lamps burning, to scatter fresh flowers on the statues of Buddha, and to perform musical services in his honour every morning and evening.

After having heard so much of the Hindú religion, I think it will interest you to read a few passages from Southey's *Curse of Kehama*. Here is a description of the worship of Juggernaut; —

HARRIET.

" A thousand pilgrims strain
 Arms, shoulders, breast and thighs, with might and main
 To drag that sacred wain,
 And scarce can draw along the enormous load;
 Prone fall the frantic votaries on its road,
 And calling on the God,
 Their self-devoted bodies there they lay
 To pave his chariot-way,
 On Jaggernaut they call;
 The ponderous car rolls on and crushes all.
 — Groans rise unheard; the dying cry
 And death and agony,
 Are trodden under foot by yon mad throng
 Who follow close, and thrust the deadly wheels along.

MOTHER.

And in these lines the cruel ceremony of the
 burning of a widow is pourtrayed, —

HARRIET.

Woe ! woe ! see Azla takes her seat
 Upon the funeral pile !
 Calmly she took her seat,
 Calmly the whole terrific pomp survey'd ;
 As on her lap the while
 The lifeless head of Arvalon was laid,
 Woe ! woe ! Neolling !
 The young Neolling !
 They strip her ornaments away,
 Bracelet and anklet, ring and chain and zone ;
 Around her neck they leave
 The marriage knot alone.

That marriage bond, which when
Yon waning moon was young
 Around her virgin neck
With bridal joy was hung ;
Then with white flowers, the coronal of death,
 Her jetty locks they crown.
 Oh sight of misery !

You cannot hear her cries, ... all other sound
In that wild dissonance is drown'd ;
 But in her face you see
The supplication and the agony.
See, in her swelling throat, the desperate strength,
That with vain effort struggles yet for life ;
Her arms contracted now, in fruitless strife,
 Now wildly at full length
Towards the crowd in vain for pity spread ;
They force her on, they bind her to the dead.

Then all at once retire ;
Circling round the pile the ministering Brahmins stand,
Each lifting in his hand a torch of fire ;
Alone the father of the dead advanced,
 And lit the funeral pyre. .

CONVERSATION IV.

MYTHOLOGY OF THE BABYLONIANS, ARABIANS,
AND AMERICANS.

HARRIET.

LAST night you were speaking of the barbarous rites attending the worship of Juggernaut. I have been thinking since how nearly they resembled those of Moloch, the god of the Phœnicians.

MOTHER.

They were equally cruel ; but you must remember that children were Moloch's particular victims. This shocking custom of offering such a sacrifice is to be traced to the Babylonians, with whom almost all the idolatrous superstitions diffused through the neighbouring nations are said to have originated. The principal object of the Babylonian worship was Belus, the reputed founder of the Assyrian Empire, who was deified after his death, and held the same rank as the Jupiter of the Greeks, and the Osiris of the Egyptians. He had a magnificent temple at Babylon, which was supposed to have been originally the Tower of

Babel. It contained a gigantic image of the god himself, in massive gold, and was enriched by several monarchs, till Xerxes plundered and demolished it, after his unfortunate expedition against Greece. In consequence of the Babylonian priests, who were also philosophers, addicting themselves to the study of astrology, this pretended science was blended in a great measure with their religion.

The Canaanites, Philistines, Syrians, and other tribes, had several deities, of whom the most important were Moloch, Baal, Dagon, and Rimmon, or Astarte. Moloch we have already mentioned. Baal and Dagon were gods of the Philistines, and you cannot be ignorant of the fate attending the image of Dagon, which is recorded in the Old Testament.

HARRIET.

It fell down before the ark of God, and was broken in pieces.

MOTHER.

The confusion of the worshippers of Baal is equally remarkable, who, when presuming to place their god in competition with the Most High, called upon him in vain to answer them by fire.

Rimmon, or Astarte, entitled the Queen of Heaven, was a powerful divinity of the Syrians, and was regarded by them as Venus was by the

Greeks. Adonis, or Thammuz, her husband, was also worshipped in these countries; he was sometimes called Atys, or Attis, in allusion to his supposed death by the tusk of a wild boar, which was annually lamented with solemn ceremonies.

We must not pass over the religion of the primitive Arabians, which, like that of the surrounding nations, soon degenerated from its original simplicity, the belief of a Supreme God, into the grossest idolatry. They not only adored the planets and fixed stars, but angels, whom they styled the daughters of God. These angels were imagined to reside in the stars, and to govern the world under the direction of the Supreme Being. Seven celebrated temples, besides several statues, were dedicated to the seven planets; but the chief Arabian temple was the Caaba, at Mecca, which was probably built by the first descendants of Ishmael: it was held in great reverence long before the time of Mahomet, who reformed the gross idolatry that existed in the religion of his country. The fame of this temple has been since much increased by the number of pilgrims who have resorted thither, to perform their devotions at the tomb of Mahomet, their prophet.

HARRIET.

The celestial bodies seem to have been very generally worshipped by these different nations.

MOTHER.

This was not confined to the countries of the East, for in South America they were also held in the highest reverence.

HARRIET.

Is there much known of the superstitions of the South American Indians?

MOTHER.

No; they are generally involved in great obscurity, and we have but an imperfect knowledge of those of the Mexicans and Peruvians. The mild nature of the Peruvian religion tended to render the national character of the Peruvians more gentle than that of any people in the new world. The sun was their chief divinity, and was regarded as the protector of their empire; and to the moon and stars they paid secondary honours. The names of their deities, next in importance, were Pachamana, or the earth, and Manacocha, or the mother sea. Their great temple was at Cusco, the capital of Peru, and virgins, similar to the vestals at Rome, were appointed to their service. The oblations offered to these gods were innocent and humane, as the Peruvians did not imagine that their deities could be pleased with the horrid sacrifice of human victims.

HARRIET.

Were not the Peruvian kings revered almost as divinities by their subjects?

MOTHER.

Yes; and this arose from the belief that was entertained of their heavenly origin. They were called the children of the sun, and were believed to be under the immediate protection of that deity, who was supposed to dictate every order of the reigning Inca or monarch. The influence their sovereigns thus obtained, prompted them to imitate the beneficent power which they represented, and consequently instances of rebellion against the reigning prince were extremely rare.

HARRIET.

Was the Mexican religion the same as the Peruvian?

MOTHER.

Quite the reverse; for the Mexican divinities were clothed with terror, and delighted in vengeance. The great object of their worship was Vitzliputzli, or Mexitli, who was thought to have conducted the march of their ancestors from the northern regions to their southern abode. The Mexicans worshipped another god, entitled Kaloc; and they also adored a goddess, whom they called the great Mother and Mistress of the Waters. Fear

was the only principle that inspired the votaries of these deities; and human victims were supposed to be the most acceptable offerings that could be made. Their principal temple was in the city of Mexico; it is described as having been of a pyramidal form, decorated with the figures of serpents, tigers, and other destructive animals; and two altars for the purpose of sacrifice, with a shrine of the deity, were placed on its summit. Almost all the temples in South America were erected upon the same plan: the image of Vitzliputzli was that of a man seated on an azure-coloured stool, in an ark, or litter; his forehead also was azure, and a band of the same colour passed under his nose, from one ear to the other. A rich plume of feathers was on his head; in his left hand he held a target, and in his right an azure wand.

The Mexicans, like the Peruvians, appointed virgins to the service of their gods.

CONVERSATION V.

MYTHOLOGY OF THE SCYTHIANS, SCANDINAVIANS,
AND CELTS.

MOTHER.

I now intend to give you some account of the superstitions of the Scythians, Scandinavians, and Celts. The Scythians inhabited a large tract of country to the north of Europe and Asia ; in early times their religion was very simple ; it taught the belief of a Supreme God, to whom were attributed infinite power, knowledge, and justice ; it forbade any representation of this being, under a corporeal form, and enjoined the celebration of his worship in consecrated woods. Under him, a number of inferior divinities were supposed to govern the world, and preside over the celestial bodies. The doctrine of a future state formed an important part of the Mythology of these people, and their fundamental maxims were, to serve the Deity with sacrifice and prayer, to do no wrong to others, and to be brave and intrepid. But in the course of time the religion of the Scythians degenerated ; a multitude

of other divinities were introduced amongst them, and as they were a warlike people, they made the god of battles their favourite deity; to him they consecrated groves of oak, which were held so sacred, that whoever injured them was punished with death. A scymitar, raised upon the summit of an immense wooden altar, was the emblem of this god, to whom they sacrificed horses, and every hundredth man taken in battle. The first fruits of the earth, and a portion of the spoils gained in war, were the offerings made to the other divinities. The principal Scythian deities were :

1. Tabite, the Vesta of later times.
2. Papius, the Jupiter.
3. Apia, or the earth, the consort of Papius.
4. Stripassa, the Venus.
5. Oestosynes, the Apollo.
6. Thamimasides, the Neptune.

The Scythians venerated fire, as the principle of all things, and the wind and the sword as the cause of life and death.

A being called Zamolxis, was supposed to have the charge of conducting departed spirits to their respective abodes, and sacrifices were made to him by the friends of deceased persons, in their behalf.

I need hardly tell you what country the Scandinavians inhabited.

HARRIET.

It included that large tract which contains the

modern kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Lapland and Finland.

MOTHER.

The original inhabitants of these countries were the reputed descendants of the Scythians, and in some points the religion of both nations was similar. The Scandinavians sacrificed human victims, and sometimes even their kings, to appease the gods in times of public calamity.

HARRIET.

Who were their chief divinities ?

MOTHER.

Odin or Wodin, Frea or Friga, and Thor. Odin or Wodin, is generally supposed to have been a deified warlike prince ; he was the god and father of war, and was thought to adopt, as his children, all who died in battle ; he was also worshipped as the god of arts and sciences, from his having in some degree civilized the countries which he subdued. The fourth day of the week was consecrated to him, and was called Wodin's day, which is now corrupted into our Wednesday.

Freia or Friga, the consort of Odin, was the most amiable of the Scandinavian goddesses. She was also called Vanadis, or the goddess of hope, and under the name of Hertha she was considered as a personification of earth. Virgins of

high birth devoted themselves to her service, and Friday, the sixth day of the week, was named after her.

Thor, the eldest and bravest of the sons of Odin and Frea, was the god of the ærial regions; prayers were addressed to him for favourable winds, and refreshing showers, and Thursday, the fifth day of the week, was dedicated to him.

HARRIET.

Did the Scandinavians erect temples to their gods, or worship them in groves like the Scythians?

MOTHER.

In the earliest times they performed their rites in groves, but they afterwards raised temples to their gods; the most magnificent of which were at Upsal and Drontheim.

The inferior deities of the Scandinavians were,

1. Niorder, who presided over the seas, navigation, hunting, and fishing.
2. Isminsul, or the column of the universe.
3. Surtur, prince of the genii of fire.
4. Balder, a son of Odin.
5. Tur, the dispenser of victory.
6. Heindal, the guardian of the heavens.
7. Hoder, the blind, a son of Odin.
8. Vidar, the god of silence, a son of Odin.
9. Braga, the god of poetry.
10. Vati, the formidable archer.

11. Uller, presiding over trials by duel.
12. Hela, the dreadful goddess of death.
13. Torseti, decided the differences of gods and men.
14. The Valkyries were goddesses of slaughter.
15. Iduna, the queen of youth.
16. Saga, the goddess of waterfalls.
17. Vara, the witness of oaths.
18. Lofen, the guardian of friendship.
19. Synia, avenger of broken faith.

The notions the Scandinavians entertained of hell, were very remarkable ; it was called Niffhein, and consisted of nine vast regions of ice, situated under the North Pole, the entrance to which was guarded by the dog of darkness, similar to the Grecian Cerberus. Loke, the evil genius, who was the cruel enemy of gods and men, with his daughter Hela, the goddess of death ; the giantess Angherbode, the messenger of ill ; the wolf Femis, a monster, dreaded by the gods, as destined to be their destruction, and the equally formidable serpent, resided in this gloomy abode, which has been described by Gray, in his " Descent of Odin."

HARRIET.

And did the Scandinavians entertain an equally extravagant notion of heaven ?

MOTHER.

They believed that what formed their highest

enjoyments in this world, would likewise constitute their happiness in the next. They imagined, that the souls of heroes who had fallen in battle, would pass their days in hunting shadowy forms of wild beasts, or in combats with warriors, and at night would assemble in the hall of Odin, to feast and drink mead or ale out of the skulls of their enemies whom they had slain in their mortal life. This view of happiness, in a future state of existence, has prevailed amongst almost all nations.

We now come to the religion of our forefathers, the Celts, which was also that of the ancient Germans and Gauls. All the Celtic nations, like the early Scythians, performed their religious ceremonies in sacred groves; and they regarded the oak, and the mistletoe growing upon it, with peculiar reverence. Their principal deities were,

1. Teutates, the god of war.
2. Dis, the god of the infernal regions, and the Pluto of after times.
3. Andate, the goddess of victory.

The god of war was the divinity of the greatest importance; upon his altars human victims were sacrificed, and though criminals were deemed the most acceptable offerings, innocent persons were frequently immolated.

HARRIET.

Were not the Celtic priests called druids?

MOTHER.

Yes; and their name was derived from the word *deru*, which in the Celtic language, signifies an oak; because their usual abode was in woods. These priests were most highly revered, they were referred to in all civil as well as religious matters, and so great was their influence in the state, that even kings could not ascend the throne without their approbation. They were divided into four classes, druids, bards, *sarronides*, and *vates* or *eubages*; the first were the supreme chiefs, and so highly revered, that the inferior orders could not remain in their presence without permission to do so. The bards, whose Celtic name signified a singer, celebrated the actions of heroes in verse, which they sang, and accompanied upon the harp. The *sarronides* had the charge of instructing youth, whom they were enjoined to inspire with virtuous sentiments; and the *vates* or *eubages*, had the care of the sacrifices, and applied themselves particularly to the study of nature. The druids enjoyed great privileges; they were exempted from serving in war, and paying taxes. Numbers aspired to gain admission into this order of society, for it was open to all ranks; but this was rather difficult, as the candidates were obliged to learn the verses which contained the maxims of their religion and political government.

It was unlawful to commit the druidical doctrines

to writing, and therefore they were taught, and transmitted from generation to generation, entirely by the poems recited by the druids, who required a period of fifteen or even twenty years to acquire an adequate knowledge on the subject. The druids considered the misletoe as a special gift from the Divinity to the oak, and the gathering of this plant was the most sacred of their ceremonies. I think you read some account of this not long ago.

HARRIET.

Yes, I remember that the priests walked in procession, to gather the misletoe, on the sixth day of the moon, in the month of December, singing hymns, and accompanied by a great multitude. The chief of the druids, with a small golden scythe, cropped the misletoe, which the priests received with great reverence in a sagum or white vest, and after the sacrifice of two white bulls, the ceremony was concluded, by a feast, and prayers to the Divinity.

MOTHER.

But you do not mention the object of the prayers, which was to solicit a blessing upon this plant, that might be extended to all those who should receive it; for on the first day of the year it was distributed to the people by the priests.

CONVERSATION VI.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE
GREEKS AND ROMANS.

MOTHER.

IF what I have already told you is pretty clearly arranged in your memory, we will proceed to the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, which I know you have been long desirous to enter upon.

HARRIET.

Though I am very glad that we are come to this part of the subject, still I am pleased to have obtained some knowledge of the mythology of the less civilized part of the heathen world. I recollect having read somewhere, that the number of the Greek and Roman deities amounted to thirty thousand.

MOTHER.

Such an estimate must be a very great exaggeration. They were, however, a formidable host, and it was found convenient to divide them into four orders ; I shall give you a list of the names of the

most distinguished, which you will find a great assistance to your memory.

The first order comprised the Supreme Gods, or gods of the nations, so called because they were known and worshipped by every nation. They were twenty in number, and their names were :

Cœlus, the father of the gods.

Terra, or Vesta Prisca.

Saturn, the god of time.

Jupiter, the king of heaven.

Neptune, the god of the sea.

Mercury, the god of eloquence, arts and sciences.

Apollo, the god of music, physic, poetry and rhetoric.

Mars, the god of war.

Vulcan, the god of fire.

Juno, the queen of heaven.

Ceres, the goddess of harvests.

Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

Vesta, the goddess of fire.

Diana, the goddess of the chase.

Venus, the goddess of beauty.

Cybele, the mother of the gods.

Orcus, or Pluto, the god of hell.

Sol or the Sun, the god of the seasons.

Bacchus, the god of wine.

Luna, Hecate, or Diana, the goddess of night.

The second order included what were called the

gods of inferior nations and the rural deities; they had no place in heaven, nor were they admitted to the council of Jupiter. They were,

Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana.

Bellona, the goddess of war.

Plutus, the god of riches.

Nox, the goddess of night.

Somnus, the god of sleep.

Momus, the god of laughter.

Comus, the god of revelry.

Cupid, the god of love.

Hebe, the goddess of youth.

Iris, the messenger of the gods.

Janus, god of the year.

Eolus, god of winds.

To this order belong also the gods presiding over the several occasions or epochs of life.

The rural deities were,

Pan, the god of shepherds and huntsmen.

Priapus, the god of gardens.

Pomona, the goddess of fruits.

Flora, the goddess of flowers.

Pales, the goddess of shepherds.

Pilumnus, presided over the grinding of corn.

Sylvanus, with other gods of the woods, and the gods of the rivers.

Mellona, the goddess of bees.

Hippona, the goddess of horses; with many others, too numerous to add.

Besides these, the Satyrs, Fauns, and Egipans were amongst the number of rural divinities.

The third order was composed of demi-gods, who derived their origin from a mortal and a goddess, or from a god and a mortal. Kings and heroes, who by their valour had raised themselves to the rank of immortals, were likewise considered as demi-gods. Some of the most remarkable were,

Esculapius.

Prometheus.

Orpheus.

Dædalus,

Janus,

Romulus,

Perseus,

Cecrops,

Pelops,

Theseus,

Deucalion,

Hercules,

Jason,

Bellerophon,

Castor and Pollux,

} Deified Kings.

} Deified Heroes.

The fourth order contained the several physical, moral, and intellectual qualities, as well as the miseries, blessings, or accidents of life — such as

Health.

Justice.

Temperance.

Chastity.

Hope.

Fear.

Courage.

Prudence.

Virtue.

Good sense.

Honour.

Invention.

Pain.

Poverty.

Envy.

Jealousy.

Fraud.

Discord.

Also to this order belong,

Plenty.

Fame.

Silence.

Peace.

Fortune.

Necessity.

With many other personifications of air, sound, and space, which it would be difficult to characterize.

The deities of the first order were divided into two classes. The first was called the council of

Jupiter the supreme divinity, and was composed of six gods, and six goddesses.

Gods.	Goddesses.
1. Jupiter.	1. Juno.
2. Neptune.	2. Ceres.
3. Mercury.	3. Minerva.
4. Apollo.	4. Vesta.
5. Mars.	5. Diana.
6. Vulcan.	6. Venus.

The second class was composed of eight divinities, who did not assist at the supreme council, but were named select gods : these were,

Cœlus.	Terra or Vesta Prisca.
Sol.	Luna.
Saturn.	Cybele.
Bacchus.	Pluto or Orcus.

MOTHER.

I must begin by saying a few words about the most ancient of all the divinities.

Cœlus, or heaven, was esteemed the most ancient of all the gods, and Vesta Prisca, or Terra, his wife, was considered the first of the goddesses. They had two sons, Titan and Saturn, which last was regarded as the personification of Time.

Titan, as the first born of the celestial family, was heir to the throne, but in compliance with his mother Vesta's desire, he yielded his right to his younger brother, on condition that he should de-

stroy his male children. Saturn accordingly devoured his sons as soon as they were born ; till Cybele his consort, upon the birth of Jupiter, deceived her husband by substituting a stone instead of his son ; and she practised the same artifice when Pluto and Neptune were born. The goddess, fearful of any evil happening to Jupiter, had him secretly conveyed to Crete where he was nourished by the milk of the goat Amalthea, and brought up by Adrasta and Ida, two nymphs of the island, and the Corybantes, who were priests of Cybele. At length Titan was informed of what had passed, and in revenge made war upon Saturn, whom he bound in chains, together with his consort Cybele, and they remained in captivity until Jupiter liberated them by conquering Titan. Saturn soon became jealous of his son's power, and laid snares for his destruction, and Jupiter in his own defence drove his father from Olympus. Saturn then took refuge in Italy, where Janus, king of that country, received him hospitably, and allowed him a share in his government.

After this event, the kingdom of Janus was called Latium, from the Latin word *latere*, which means, to lie hid, an appellation having reference to Saturn's retreat thither. From the happiness which prevailed on earth during Saturn's reign, that period was called the golden age, and festivals in commemoration of it were held every year at Rome.

These feasts were called Saturnalia, and lasted three, four, and five successive days. During their continuance there was an universal cessation of business, the greatest festivity prevailed, and slaves were allowed for that short season to enjoy the blessing of liberty. The reputation of Saturn became so great that Italy was frequently called Saturnia.

HARRIET.

How is Saturn represented ?

MOTHER.

Generally as an old man bent with age, holding a scythe in his right hand, and in his left a serpent, as an emblem of time and the revolution of the year. In the most ancient statues of this god he wears chains in memory of those with which Jupiter bound him, and for this reason it was usual for slaves who had obtained their liberty to dedicate their fetters to Saturn.

Cybele, as the mother of the greater number of the gods, was called Magna Mater, or the great mother. She had various other names, the most common of which were Dindymene, Idæa, and Berecynthia, derived from different mountains where she was more particularly worshipped ; and also Ops, Tellus, and Rhea, as presiding over the earth. The worship of Cybele was extremely ancient, and attended with great solemnity. The

festivals held in her honour were called the *Megalesia*, and her priests were named *Galli* from a river in *Phrygia*, and sometimes *Corybantes* from the noise of cymbals and drums with which they celebrated her feasts in remembrance of her sorrow for the loss of her favourite *Atys*, a beautiful youth.

The temples of this goddess were circular, in imitation of the form of the earth, and one was dedicated to her at Rome, called the *Opertum*, from which all of the male sex were absolutely excluded.

HARRIET.

I think I have seen a statue of *Cybele* with her head crowned with turrets; what is that intended to signify?

MOTHER.

That she was considered as the first who fortified the walls of cities with towers. She is usually represented in a sitting posture, to denote the stability of the earth, with a drum or disk in her hand, emblematical of the winds supposed to be confined in its centre. The box and pine trees were sacred to *Cybele*.

HARRIET.

Why was *Janus*, whose name I see in the second order, ranked among the gods?

MOTHER.

On account of the improvements he had introduced amongst the wild inhabitants of Italy. The Romans invoked his name at the beginning of all their religious ceremonies; for as he presided over gates and avenues, it was thought that their prayers could alone reach the immortal gods through him. The invention of crowns and boats was attributed to Janus, and he was the first who brought copper money into use. He presided over the year; and twelve altars were dedicated to him, one for each month; the first of which, January, was called after his name. Numa Pompilius erected a temple to him, which was always open in time of war, and was closed only three times during the period of seven hundred years. This may give us some idea of the continual state of warfare in which the Romans were accustomed to live.

HARRIET.

And why is Janus represented with two faces?

MOTHER.

To express the knowledge he possessed of the past and future, with which Saturn endowed him. He generally has a wand and a key in his hand. as inspector of public roads, and the inventor of doors.

CONVERSATION VII.

JUPITER, JUNO.

MOTHER.

BEFORE we proceed farther in the account of Jupiter, I should tell you, that reserving heaven for himself, he divided the remainder of his empire between his two brothers, Neptune and Pluto. The peaceful commencement of Jupiter's reign was interrupted by the rebellion of the giants, who wished to avenge the death of their relations, the Titans. Several of the gods, to avoid their fury, fled to Egypt, where they were imagined to assume the form of different animals; but Jupiter soon prevailed over his enemies, and his dominion became universal, though the superior influence of Destiny or Fate was still acknowledged. Whilst the heathens ascribed power, justice, and wisdom to Jupiter, they attributed to him many human vices and weaknesses; but the adoration paid to him surpassed in solemnity that offered to all other divinities. Each nation had its own peculiar Jupiter: he was the Ammon of the Africans, the

Belus of Babylon, the Osiris of Egypt: the Romans looked upon him as the guardian of their empire, and gave him the different surnames of Capitolinus, Teutinus, Inventor, Tonans, Fulminans, Latialis, Victor, and Maximus Optimus, according to the places or functions over which he presided; and the Greeks gave him the title of Jupiter Olympius, from Mount Olympus, which was believed to be his ordinary abode.

HARRIET.

Was there not a famous temple dedicated to Jupiter at the city of Olympia?

MOTHER.

Yes, a very celebrated one, containing a statue of this deity, which was the production of Phidias, and so exquisitely beautiful, that it was one of the seven wonders of the world. The temple of Jupiter at Rome, on the Capitoline hill, was also very magnificent.

HARRIET.

Was this the famous Capitol of Rome that is so often mentioned in history?

MOTHER.

Yes; it was first erected in the time of the Roman kings, but having been burned during the civil

wars of Marius, it was rebuilt by the Emperor Domitian. Here, the consuls and magistrates offered sacrifices when they first entered upon their offices, and triumphal processions were always conducted to the Capitol. The victims usually offered to Jupiter were a goat, a sheep, or a white bull with gilded horns. Solemn festivals were held in Greece in honour of Jupiter, which were called the Olympic Games, from Olympia, where they were observed. The antiquity of these games is so great, that it is impossible to decide, with any certainty, on the period of their origin. They took place every five years, and during several ages each of these intervals served for a chronological era in Greece.

HARRIET.

How were these games celebrated ?

MOTHER.

They were preceded and followed by sacrifices to the gods, and consisted in athletic exercises, such as wrestling, running, and throwing the quoit, with horse and chariot races, besides still nobler contentions in poetry, eloquence, and the fine arts. The only reward the conquerors obtained was a crown of olive ; and this trifling recompense was then deemed a sufficient stimulus to courage and virtue. Painters and poets commea-

morated the victories obtained at Olympia; and they are the subject of the most beautiful of the odes of Pindar.

Jupiter is generally represented under the figure of a majestic old man with a venerable beard, seated upon a golden or ivory throne. In his right hand he holds a thunderbolt, and in his left a sceptre of cypress, expressive of durability and power; the Titans are placed under his feet, and an eagle stands beside him with outstretched wings. The upper part of his body was uncovered, to signify that he was visible to the inhabitants of the celestial regions; the lower part covered, to express his invisibility to mortals. The description given by Homer, in the *Iliad*, of this mighty being, is so expressive of his attributes, that I think you will like to read it.

HARRIET.

“ He whose all conscious eyes the world behold,
Th’ eternal Thunderer sits enthron’d in gold :
High heaven the footstool of his feet he makes,
And wide beneath him all Olympus shakes.”

MOTHER.

Juno, the sister and consort of Jupiter, and the goddess of empires and riches, was called by the Greeks Hera or Mistress, or Megale the Great : the Romans gave her the titles of Juno Matrona, or the matron; Juno Regina, or the queen; and

Juno Monitor, the admonisher; and of all the goddesses her worship was the most solemn and universal. She may be regarded as the Isis of the Egyptians, as Jupiter was the Osiris. She had many magnificent temples, and one at Argos contained an immense statue of the goddess, in gold and ivory. The Roman matrons regarded her as the particular patroness of the most virtuous of her sex, and the Roman consuls were obliged to offer solemn sacrifices to her before they entered upon their office. The ewe-lamb was her ordinary victim: young geese, the hawk and the peacock, were consecrated to her; and the dittany and poppy were her sacred plants.

Juno is described as of a haughty and vindictive character, continually disturbing the harmony of the courts above with her jealousies and contentions. She was usually represented as a magnificent woman, seated upon a throne, holding a sceptre in one hand and a spindle in the other, and wearing a radiant crown upon her head, with her favourite bird, the peacock, standing near her.

HARRIET.

Why was the peacock so dear to Juno?

MOTHER.

The fabulous account is, that Juno having been offended by some of the proceedings of Jupiter

set the monster Argus, who had a hundred eyes, to watch him : this incensed the god so much, that Argus was slain by his order, upon which Juno placed his eyes in the tail of the peacock.

The beautiful Iris was the attendant and messenger of Juno : her peculiar offices were to create dissensions, and to release the souls of females struggling in the pangs of death. She is represented as descending upon a rainbow, with expanded wings, clothed in floating robes of brilliant and varying colours, — and the rainbow is regarded as her image.

CONVERSATION VIII.

MALE DIVINITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF JUPITER,
MERCURY, NEPTUNE, APOLLO, MARS, VULCAN.

MOTHER.

OF the male deities who composed the council of Jupiter I shall first speak of Mercury his son, and especial messenger. Mercury was worshipped in Egypt, Greece, and Italy; and he was severally called Cyllenius, from Mount Cylleni, where he was born; Hermes, or the inventor of eloquence; Nomius, from his having invented laws; Camillus, from his office of minister of the gods; and Vialis, from his presiding over the formation of roads. Mercury was the god of eloquence, arts, sciences, and commerce, and he conducted the souls of the dead to the infernal regions, and presided over transmigration. He was the patron of travellers, and shepherds,—and from being suspected of countenancing dishonesty was regarded as the protector of thieves. He invented weights and measures,—and the lyre with seven strings was also attributed to him.

HARRIET.

I thought Apollo had been the inventor of that instrument.

MOTHER.

Though Apollo was the god of music, still Mercury claimed the lyre as his own ; but he exchanged it with Apollo for his celebrated caduceus or wand.

The tongues of animals, milk, and honey, were offered to Mercury, as the god of eloquence. As the god of commerce, the Roman merchants annually held a festival to his honour, where the votaries sprinkled themselves with water, and addressed prayers, entreating him to forgive whatever deceptions they had practised in pursuit of gain.

Mercury is generally described as a youth with a cheerful countenance, having wings attached to his head and feet, to show the celerity with which he performed his different functions ; and in his hand he holds the caduceus, which was a kind of wand, entwined with two serpents. The rod was supposed to express power ; the serpents, prudence ; and the whole was a symbol of peace.

HARRIET.

Why was it regarded as a symbol of peace ?

MOTHER.

Because when Mercury placed his wand be-

tween two serpents who were fighting, they clung round it, and became reconciled.

HARRIET.

Is not Mercury sometimes represented with a purse in his hand ?

MOTHER.

Yes ; in his character of the god of commerce ; and to denote the power of eloquence, some of his statues appear without arms or feet. The Romans placed the statue of Mercury before their doors to defend them from thieves, and on the high roads to point out the way to travellers.

Neptune was the brother of Jupiter, and was almost universally worshipped. The Greeks called him Poseidon, which means, to dash vessels in pieces ; and the Romans gave him the name of Consus, or the god of council. He was the god of the seas, and presided over the training of horses. His temples were numerous ; and the bull and the horse were his ordinary victims. Festivals similar to the Olympic games, were held in honour of Neptune : those of the Greeks were called the Isthmean games, from the Isthmus of Corinth, near which they were celebrated, and those of the Romans, the Consualia. During all the feasts of Neptune it was customary to deck the horses and mules with garlands of flowers.

HARRIET.

Why was the horse so distinguished ?

MOTHER.

Because it is said that Neptune produced that animal by striking his foot on the ground when he contested with Minerva the honour of naming the city of Athens. Neptune is generally represented as standing erect in a chariot, formed of a large shell, drawn by sea-horses or dolphins, holding in his hand a trident, with which he commanded the waves, sea-nymphs playing round him, and the tritons sounding their trumpets of shells.

HARRIET.

Who were the tritons ?

MOTHER.

They were imaginary sea animals, the upper part of whose bodies resembled that of a man, and the lower part that of a dolphin. The first triton was the son of Neptune and his consort Amphitrite.

HARRIET.

Had not Neptune several other children ?

MOTHER.

Yes ; the most remarkable of them were Polyphemus, Phorcas, and Proteus. The first of these was chief of the Cyclops, dreadful giants, with

one eye in the middle of their foreheads, who resided in Sicily, and devoured those human beings who were so unfortunate as to fall into their power. Phorcas was the father of the three gorgons, Medusa, Euryale, and Stheno, who were female monsters, with scales on their bodies, brazen hands, golden wings, and snakes instead of hair. Proteus was entrusted with the care of his father's flocks: he possessed the gift of prophecy, and the faculty of changing himself into whatever form he pleased; hence a fickle person is frequently called a Proteus.

Apollo, the son of Jupiter and Latona, was born in the island of Delos, where his mother was protected by Neptune from the persecution of Juno; from this place of his nativity, he obtained the name of Delos; he was also called Phœbus, a word signifying light and life; (hence he has been often confounded with Sol, the sun,) and Pythius, from the dreadful serpent Python, which he slew with his arrows; Cynthius, from Cynthus, a mountain in Delos; Nomius, or the lawgiver; Pœan, from his power of mitigating pain, or his skill in hunting; and Delphicus, from Delphos in Greece, where a famous temple and oracle were dedicated to him. He was the god of light, eloquence, music, medicine, and poetry; the patron of shepherds; the protector of the muses, and the polite arts; he also possessed the power of inflicting as well as re-

moving pestilential disorders. Jupiter banished this god for a season from the celestial regions for having destroyed the Cyclops, who, as the forgers of Jove's thunderbolts, had caused the death of Esculapius, the favourite son of Apollo.

HARRIET.

And why was Esculapius slain?

MOTHER.

Because by his great skill in medicine he had prevented men from dying, and Jupiter was offended that a mortal should presume to usurp his privilege.

During the period of his banishment Apollo took refuge in Thessaly with Admetus, king of that country, where he engaged himself in the capacity of shepherd: here he is said to have invented the harp; and poets assert that the walls of Troy were raised by the melodious tones which he drew from that instrument.

It was during his exile that Apollo pursued the nymph Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus, who, when no longer able to continue her flight, was metamorphosed into a laurel, which tree the god afterwards consecrated to himself. Having accidentally killed a beautiful boy called Hyacinthus, with a blow of a quoit, he caused the flower, to which he gave the name of Hyacinth, to

spring from his blood. Many of the actions ascribed to Apollo are very absurd. Do you recollect how he punished king Midas, for giving the prize in a musical contest to the god Pan in preference to himself?

HARRIET.

Oh, yes ; he stretched his ears to the length and shape of those of an ass, and the barber of Midas though he was bribed to keep this a secret, dug a hole in the earth, into which he whispered the fact ; and the reeds that afterwards grew upon the spot were supposed, when moved by the winds, to utter the words, " Midas has the ears of an ass."

MOTHER.

The fate of the satyr Marsyas was more cruel, who, for challenging Apollo to a musical contest, was flayed alive, and metamorphosed into a river in Phrygia.

Temples were erected to Apollo in almost every country : the most remarkable were at Delos and Delphos, and oracles were delivered in all of them. Do you know what an oracle means ?

HARRIET.

Oracles were the supposed supernatural answers of the gods to the questions of men.

MOTHER.

The most celebrated were at Delphos and Do-

dona in Greece, and at Ammon in Libya. The manner of communicating them was not the same at each place: at Delphos, a priestess pronounced the oracle; and her delivery of the answers was attended with acts of desperate madness and fury. At Dodona, not only women, but doves were the ministers of the oracle; and even trees were thought to convey the mysterious replies: and at Ammon the answers were given in a more open manner, in dreams, visions, or on written tablets. But the meaning of them all, was at best, obscure, and often the cause of disaster to those who consulted them; for instance, Nero was advised, by the oracle at Delphos, to beware of seventy-three years, which led him to suppose that he should live to that age: this rendered him careless, and he was only convinced of his mistake when Galba dethroned him in his seventy-third year.

HARRIET.

At what time did these oracles cease?

MOTHER.

They began to decline soon after the birth of Christ; but they were consulted, though not so frequently, till the fourth century. Games in honour of Apollo were celebrated near his temple at Delphos.

HARRIET.

Were not they the Pythian games we read of in history?

MOTHER.

Yes; and they were instituted to commemorate Apollo's victory over the serpent Python: they were not unlike the Olympic games, but consisted chiefly in a musical contention, in which whoever sang best the praises of the god gained the prize of a laurel crown.

The victims offered to Apollo were the wolf, from its piercing eyes, denoting the foresight of prophecy; the swan, the griffin, and the crow, on account of the power of divination with which this deity had inspired them; the hawk, from its eyes being as bright as the sun; and the cock, as foretelling its rising. Apollo is represented as a youth wearing a laurel crown, with a bow and arrows in one hand, and a lyre in the other; and he is sometimes described as holding a shield, and attended by the Graces. The lyre showed his authority in heaven where all is harmony, the shield his influence on earth, and the arrows, his power in the infernal regions. In a statue which has long been the admiration of the world, Apollo appears watching the arrow with which he slew the serpent Python. Will you read these lines by Milman, in which this statue is described?

HARRIET.

" Heard ye the arrow hurtle in the sky ?
Heard ye the dragon monster's deathful cry ?
In settled majesty of fierce disdain,
Proud of his might, yet scornful of the slain,
The heavenly archer stands. No human birth,
No perishable denizen of earth ;
Youth blooms immortal in his beardless face,
A god in strength, with more than godlike grace :
All, all divine — no struggling muscle glows,
Through hering vein, no mantling life-blood flows,
But animate with deity alone,
In deathless glory lives the breathing stone."

MOTHER.

As presiding over poetry, Apollo was often said to make his abode on Mount Parnassus, accompanied by the Muses, who were the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne or memory, the mistresses of science, and the patronesses of poetry and music. They were called Muses from a Greek word, which signifies to meditate or enquire, and are described as nine beautiful virgins, sometimes dancing in a ring, and sometimes playing on musical instruments, or engaged in some scientific pursuit. They had each a name derived from some particular accomplishment of mind or branch of science.

1. Calliope presided over rhetoric, and was so called from the sweetness of her voice.

2. Clio was the muse of history, and is so

named from glory, or the excellence of what she records.

3. Erato, the inspirer of poetry, and of the triumphs and complaints of lovers, had her name from a Greek word signifying love.

4. Thalia was the muse of comedy, and her name denotes the blooming: she is represented as reclining on a pillow, and holding a mask in her hand.

5. Melpomene presided over tragedy, and was so called from the melody of her voice: she is generally seen resting upon the club of Hercules, because the object of tragedy was to represent the brilliant actions and the misfortunes of heroes.

6. Terpsichore presided over dancing, and had her name from the pleasure she took in dancing. She is sometimes called Citharistria.

7. Euterpe, or Euterpia, was the patroness of instrumental music: her name signifies the agreeable: she is always described as surrounded with musical instruments.

8. Polyhymnia, or Polymnia or Polymneia, presided over odes and miscellaneous poetry, which her name implies.

9. Urania, the inventress of astronomy, was so called because men by her means became conversant with celestial things. She is represented as holding a globe, which is often placed on a tripod.

The nine Muses altogether were sometimes called Heliconides, from Mount Helicon in Bœotia; Parnassides, from Mount Parnassus in Phocis; Citherides, from the mountain Citheron; Aonides, from the country Aonia; Pierides, from the mountain Pieria in Thrace; Aganippides, from the fountain Aganippe; or Castalides, from the fountain Castalius at the foot of Parnassus. They were also called Pegasides, and Hippocrenides, from the famous fountain Hippocrene which gushed from the ground when Pegasus sprang into the air. Pegasus was a winged horse, whose abode was on Mount Parnassus, where he attended upon Apollo and the Muses.

Mars, the son of Jupiter and Juno, was called by the Romans, Gradivus in war, from his stateliness in marching, and Quirinus in peace, from a word signifying a spear. The Greeks styled him Ares, owing to the destruction which he caused; and from this title the famous court of Justice on the hill at Athens derived the name of Areopagus, or hill of Mars, for it was said that Mars was once judged and acquitted there by the gods. Mars was the god of war, and presided over all martial exercises. The Romans paid this deity peculiar honours: they regarded him as the father of their first monarch and the guardian of their city, where temples were dedicated to him. The principal employ-

ment of the priests of Mars, who were called Salii, was to guard the ancilia, or sacred shields.

HARRIET.

What were the sacred shields?

MOTHER.

A shield was once found of an unknown form, for which reason it was supposed to have fallen from heaven; and the oracle, on being consulted, declared that universal empire was destined for the people who should preserve it. Numa Pompilius, in order to secure his power, ordered eleven shields to be made, which resembled this so exactly that it was almost impossible to distinguish the original: their number was afterwards increased to twenty-four; and during a yearly festival, entitled "*Anciliorum festum*," which was held at Rome, they were carried in procession by the priests, who danced, and sang hymns in praise of their god. The form of these shields was oval. The Roman consul, or whoever had the conduct of any military enterprise, always visited the temple of Mars previous to any undertaking, where, shaking the ancilia and the spear that was placed in the hand of the image of the god, he offered up prayers for the safety of the city, exclaiming, "*Mars, watch!*"

The animals sacrificed to Mars were the wolf,

on account of its fierceness, the horse for its usefulness in war, the dog for its vigilance in pursuit of prey, the woodpecker and the vulture for their voraciousness, and the cock for its watchfulness.

Mars, who was called Ares by the Greeks, is represented as a formidable warrior covered with armour, and often attended by Bellona, the goddess of war, who was sometimes styled his sister, or wife, and always prepared his chariot for battle. He usually appears riding in a car, driven by a distracted woman, — Discord, in tattered garments, flying before them, — and attended by Clamour, Anger, Fear, and Terror. Homer describes a battle in which Mars, Minerva, and Discord are engaged.

“ Loud clamours rose from various nations round,
Mix’d was the murmur, and confused the sound.
Each host now joins, and each a god inspires,
These Mars incites, and those Minerva fires.
Pale flight around, and dreadful terror reign,
And Discord raging, bathes the purple plain.
Discord, dire sister of the slaughtering power,
Small at her birth, but rising every hour,
While scarce the skies her horrid head can bound,
She stalks on earth and shakes the world around;
The nations bleed where’er her steps she turns,
The groan still deepens and the combat burns.”

The Vulcan of the Greeks and Romans, (for he was worshipped in Egypt under the name of Phtas, son of the Nile, and represented by

the figure of a monkey) was the son of Jupiter and Juno, and was hurled from heaven by his father, on account of his deformity. From having been received at the island of Lemnos, he obtained the appellation of Lemnius : he was called Tardipes from the lameness he acquired in his fall ; and Mulciber, or Mulcifer, from softening and polishing iron. He was the god of fire, and the inventor and patron of the art of fabricating arms. Jupiter gave him for his wife Venus, the goddess of beauty, as a reward for having forged his thunderbolts. It was believed that Vulcan taught many useful arts when in the island of Lemnos, where, as well as in the subterranean caves of mount Etna, he followed his profession, assisted by his workmen the Cyclops, whose origin, I dare say, you remember.

HARRIET.

They were said to be the sons of Neptune and Amphitrite, and the chief of them were Polyphemus, Brontes, Steropes, and Pyracmon.

MOTHER.

Vulcan's most celebrated works were the famous palace of the sun, the armour of Achilles and Æneas, the crown of Ariadne, the elegant necklace of Hermione, the animated brazen dog, and a woman called Pandora, from the gods having each bestowed upon her some gift. Pallas gave her

wisdom; Apollo, the art of music; Mercury, that of eloquence; Venus, beauty; and the rest of the divinities other accomplishments.

Jupiter sent Pandora with a sealed box to Prometheus, who would not receive the present, and desired her to take it to the wife of Epimetheus his brother, who through a fatal curiosity opened it, and out flew all the miseries which have since afflicted the world, Hope alone remaining behind.

HARRIET.

I do not know who Prometheus was.

MOTHER.

He was the son of Japetus, a Titan prince, and the author of many useful inventions. He incurred the wrath of Jupiter by stealing fire from heaven to animate an image he had formed, and in consequence of this theft he was chained to a rock on mount Caucasus, where a vulture was set to prey unceasingly upon his liver, which grew again as fast as it was devoured, but Hercules was at last permitted to rescue him by killing the bird.

But to return to Vulcan, a remarkable temple was dedicated to him on mount Etna, which was said to be guarded by dogs of such exquisite scent, that they could discern whether those who entered were virtuous or vicious, and they caressed or drove them away accordingly.

The Romans invoked Vulcan the Avenger in

their most solemn treaties, and held all important assemblies in his temple. At Athens, the feasts sacred to him were called the Chalsea; at Rome they were entitled the Vulcaniæ. The victims immolated to him were a calf and a boar, and the lion was consecrated to him, because its roaring resembled the noise of a volcano.

Vulcan is represented as deformed, and lame; sometimes holding a hammer in one hand ready to strike, while with the other he turns a thunderbolt on his anvil; an eagle waits by his side to convey the thunderbolt to Jupiter.

Homer thus describes Vulcan in the midst of his works:

“ ——— The silver-footed dame
Reach'd the Vulcanian dome's eternal frame, ,
High eminent, amid the works divine,
Where heaven's far-beaming brazen mansions shine;
There the lame architect the goddess found,
Obscure in smoke, his forges flaming round;
While bathed in sweat, from fire to fire he flew,
And puffing loud, the roaring bellows blew;
Then from his anvil the lame artist rose,
Wide with distorted legs, oblique he goes,
And stills the bellows, and in order laid,
Locks in their chests the instruments of trade;
Then with a sponge the sooty workman drest
His brawny arms imbrown'd, and hairy breast:
With his huge sceptre graced, and red attire,
Came halting forth the sovereign of the fire.”

CONVERSATION IX.

FEMALE DIVINITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF JUPITER,
JUNO, CERES, MINERVA, DIANA, VESTA, VENUS.

MOTHER.

I HOPE, my dear Harriet, that you have not forgotten the names of the female deities who formed part of the council of Jupiter.

HARRIET.

I think you told me they were Juno, Ceres, Minerva, Vesta, Diana, and Venus.

MOTHER.

We have already spoken of Juno, and now I will tell you something about the other five.

Ceres, the daughter of Saturn and Cybele, was considered as the first who taught the arts of cultivating the earth, sowing seeds, and making bread, and was regarded as the Isis of the Egyptians. Ceremonies were observed in honor of her, which were entitled the Eleusinian mysteries from the city of Eleusis in Greece, where they were first

instituted, about 1356 years before Christ. These mysteries were held so sacred, that one of the heaviest accusations brought against Socrates was his neglect of this part of religious worship. All persons might be admitted to the solemnity provided they had not been convicted of any crime; but it was necessary that they should come with a proper introduction, otherwise they were put to death. The greatest secrecy was required of the votaries of Ceres; and whoever revealed what passed in her mystic temple was supposed to have called down divine vengeance upon his head. The candidates for initiation were introduced by night into the temple, where the priest read the holy mysteries; and after having questions proposed to them which they readily answered, they were alarmed by strange sounds, and still stranger objects.

The initiated were believed to be under the more particular care of the gods; and the benefits they derived were imagined to extend even beyond the grave, as they would inhabit eternally the delightful groves of Elysium, while the uninitiated were to be plunged in the mud of the Tænarus, and tormented for ever in hell. The Eleusinian mysteries were practised during the space of eighteen hundred years: they were introduced at Rome in the age of Adrian, and abolished by the Emperor Theodosius. The festival of Ceres

was celebrated every fifth year, and lasted nine successive days : it consisted of games and a variety of ceremonies : the votaries were ordered to purify themselves, to offer sacrifices, to walk in procession, singing hymns in praise of the divinity ; and after a repetition of some mystic words, the whole feast was concluded by a libation of wine in honour of the goddess.

HARRIET.

Were not torches offered to Ceres at the celebration of her feasts ?

MOTHER.

Yes ; to commemorate her having lighted her torch in the flames of mount Etna, when she was in search of her daughter Proserpine, who had been carried off by Pluto to the infernal regions.

HARRIET.

What were the offerings made to Ceres ?

MOTHER.

The animals sacrificed to her were swine, because they destroyed the fruits of the earth ; and garlands composed of ears of corn were also devoted to her. This goddess is represented under the figure of a tall majestic woman, with a garland composed of ears of corn upon her head,

holding in one hand a lighted torch, and in the other a poppy, which Jupiter had given her to soothe her grief for the loss of her daughter, this plant being endued with the power of causing sleep and forgetfulness. She is sometimes described as riding in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. The priests of Ceres wore white dresses.

HARRIET.

Were not the mysteries of Bacchus and Ceres celebrated together?

MOTHER.

At Athens only: elsewhere they were distinct ceremonies. At the former place, however, the statue of Bacchus, crowned with leaves of myrtle, was carried in great pomp from the Ceramicus* to Eleusis.

Minerva, who was said to have sprung full armed from the head of Jupiter, had several names. She was called Athena, from being the tutelary goddess of Athens; Pallas, from the Greek word signifying the brandishing of a javelin; Parthenos or the virgin; Tritonia, from the lake Tritonia, near which she was worshipped; Ergatis, the work-woman, from having invented various useful arts, especially weaving and spinning; and Glaukopis, from her blue eyes. She was the goddess of wis-

* Ceramicus, a square, or public walk, at Athens, adorned with beautiful buildings.

dom and war, and the patroness of all the liberal arts.

Homer continually describes her as the prudent goddess, the power of wisdom, the best beloved of Jove, and the most faithful of his counsellors. She was empowered to hurl Jupiter's thunderbolts, to prolong the lives of men, to bestow the gift of prophecy, and was believed to be the only divinity whose authority ever approached to that of the god himself. Jupiter is said to have rewarded the inhabitants of Rhodes, for the early reverence which they had accorded to his daughter, by raining a shower of gold upon their island. Minerva received peculiar honours at Athens; which city she had the honour of naming. You remember how Neptune contended with her for this privilege; but in an assembly of the gods, it was decreed that it should be granted to whichever bestowed the most useful gift upon mankind. Do you recollect what Neptune produced?

HARRIET.

By the stamp of his foot he raised the horse; and Minerva's gift, I believe, was the olive in full bloom.

MOTHER.

Yes; and by the universal consent of the gods, she obtained the victory; for they declared that the olive, as the emblem of peace, was preferable

to the horse, which was the symbol of war. The magnificent temple of Minerva, in the citadel of Athens, was called the Parthenon, from Parthenos, one of her names : it was adorned with a famous statue of the goddess, formed of ivory and gold, the work of Phidias. This statue, upwards of twenty-six cubits in height, represented a woman in armour, clothed with a tunic. A figure of Victory, six feet high, was poised in her open hand. The ruins of the temple still remain ; and the impression made upon the mind, on viewing this interesting relic of antiquity, is so beautifully expressed in these lines, that I wish you to read them.

HARRIET.

“ As o’er some drooping form, and time-worn face,
Oft lingers yet the shade of youthful grace,
So, Parthenon, thy beauty still appears
Amid the wreck of thy forgotten years.
Though rude barbarian mosques profane thy site,
And cells unveil’d now mingle with the light ;
Though but one lonely pillar lives to tell
Where a long range of stately columns fell ;
And half suspended now thy ruin nods,
O’er mouldering fragments of its prostrate gods ;
Yet still oblivion seems to toil in vain,
For what she razes fancy rears again.”

MOTHER.

Minerva was worshipped at the city of Troy, under the name of Pallas. The Trojans preserved, with the greatest care, her statue, which was

called the Palladium, and which they supposed to have fallen from heaven, as a pledge for the safety of their city. It is related, in the account of the Trojan war, that very soon after Ulysses and Diomed had succeeded in carrying off this precious statue, the city of Troy was taken. The term Palladium has hence been often used to signify the safeguard of any valuable object, for instance, the Palladium of our liberties. The Greeks and Romans both instituted festivals in honour of Minerva; those held at Athens were styled the *Athenæia*; they consisted of exhibitions of strength and dexterity; musical contentions on different instruments; and it was customary, during this festival, to choose persons to recite some of the poems of Homer; to make gorgeous displays of works of art; and also to set all prisoners at liberty. The victors at these games gained a crown of the olives which grew in the groves of *Academus*, sacred to Minerva. At Rome her feasts were called *Minervalia*, and while they lasted scholars were accustomed to offer their masters presents, which were called *Minerval gifts*, from Minerva, the patroness of literature.

HARRIET.

Was it not during the *Athenæia*, that the celebrated automaton galley steered with full sails through the different quarters of the city?

MOTHER.

Yes; although automaton is hardly a proper name for the mechanism which moved by means of different hidden wheels, propelled by equally hidden agents. This galley was a spectacle not only calculated to astonish the multitude, but also to excite the admiration of connoisseurs. The principal sail consisted of superb embroidery, executed by the most expert of the Athenian virgins, after the designs of their best painters.

The subject was a representation of the combat waged by the giants against heaven, where Minerva appears foremost in the defence of Olympus, and deals out blows among the Titans more dreadful than even the thunder of Jupiter. — It was to encourage the genius and address of their artists, that these displays were introduced by the Athenians.

Among the fables relating to this goddess, there is one so often alluded to, that I must relate it to you. Minerva, as the inventress of spinning and weaving, was supposed to have excelled all others in the art; but Arachne, a young lady of Lydia, was vain enough to challenge her, and Pallas, provoked with her temerity, tore her work, and struck her forehead with the wheel of the spindle. Arachne, in despair at such disgrace, hanged herself; but Minerva, in pity to her fate, brought her to life again, and turned her into a spider, which has been employed in spinning ever since.

HARRIET.

How is Minerva represented?

MOTHER.

Generally as a handsome woman, of a threatening aspect, wearing a breastplate, and a golden helmet entwined with olive : she brandishes a beaming lance in her right hand, and in her left bears the buckler, called the Egis, from its having been covered with the skin of the goat Amalthea, by whose milk Jupiter was said to have been nourished. The terrific head of the Gorgon Medusa was embossed upon it, encircled with snakes instead of hair, which had the power of turning into stone all who beheld it. Minerva is almost always attended by a cock and an owl, as the emblems of valour and meditation.

Here is the description Homer gives of the goddess arming herself for battle : —

HARRIET.

“ Now heaven’s dread arms her mighty limbs invest ;
Jove’s cuirass blazes on her ample breast :
Deck’d in sad triumph for the mournful field
O’er her broad shoulders hangs his horrid shield ;
Dim, black, tremendous ! round the margin roll’d
A fringe of serpents hissing guard the gold.
Here all the terrors of grim war appear,
Here rages fire, here tremble fright and fear,
Here storm’d contention, and here fury frown’d
And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown’d ;

The massy golden helm she next assumes,
That dreadful nods with four o'ershading plumes,
So vast, the broad circumference contains
A hundred armies on a hundred plains."

MOTHER.

Diana, the daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and the twin-sister of Apollo, was worshipped under three different characters, and was therefore styled the triform goddess. She was called Luna, as a celestial divinity; Diana, as a terrestrial goddess; and Hecate in the infernal regions. She had several surnames, such as Taurica, from receiving particular honours at that place, and Dictynnia, from the nets she made use of as a huntress. Diana was regarded as the goddess of the chase and the woods: she was supposed to enlighten heaven with her rays; to restrain wild animals on earth with her bow and dart; and to keep in awe the shadowy multitude of ghosts in the regions below. Several magnificent temples were erected to her: you must have heard of that at Ephesus, which was the admiration and one of the wonders of the world.

HARRIET.

You mean that which Erostatus destroyed on the night Alexander the Great was born, for the purpose of immortalising himself.

MOTHER.

Yes; but it soon afterwards arose from its ruins

with increased splendour; and this is the temple mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, of which the silversmiths of Ephesus sold silver shrines.

Another celebrated temple of Diana was in Taurica Chersonesus, where human victims were sacrificed to the goddess, all unhappy strangers landing there being immolated in her service. Human victims were also originally immolated to Diana, at Lacedæmon: And when the voice of humanity had softened in a degree the hearts of the Spartans, though the sacrifices were discontinued, horrible flagellations of children succeeded. Diana Orthia, as she was called in that part of Greece, having been so accustomed to cruel offerings, that the Spartans could not, without risk of great disasters to their nation, abolish one barbarity otherwise than by substituting another. — The goat and the dog were sacred to Diana, and a white kid was sometimes offered to her.

HARRIET.

And was not the poppy dedicated to her, too, as well as to Ceres?

MOTHER.

Yes; and so was the dittany, I believe. Diana had oracles in different parts of the world, like her brother Apollo, but they were not celebrated with equal magnificence.

Diana is represented under the figure of a tall

woman in a hunting-dress, with a bow in her hand, a silver crescent on her forehead, and a quiver suspended across her shoulders: she is usually attended by dogs, and is sometimes seated in a chariot drawn by two white stags. She is also frequently described as accompanied by her nymphs, the Oceanides, who were sixty in number, and with twenty other attendants, that had been granted to her by Jupiter. They devoted themselves with the goddess to a life of perpetual celibacy; and in order to shun the society of mankind, they passed their days in hunting. Did you ever hear the fate of the unfortunate Acteon, who had inadvertently intruded on Diana in her retirement?

HARRIET.

He was metamorphosed into a stag, and devoured by his own dogs.

MOTHER.

Diana banished from her society Calisto, a favourite nymph, for having broken her vows, and Juno, in a fit of jealousy, transformed her into a bear. She would have perished by a dart aimed at her by her own son, had not Jupiter interposed, and translated them both to heaven, where they form the constellations of the greater and lesser bears.

Vesta, the daughter of Saturn and Cybele, was the goddess of fire. She was the president and

guardian of houses; and was one of the household divinities. Images of this goddess were therefore placed before the houses at Rome, to which daily sacrifices were made; and the places where these statues were set up were called Vestibulæ. The worship of Vesta was introduced into Italy at a very early period, by Æneas, from Phrygia, where fire was held an object of great religious veneration. Numa Pompilius built a temple to this goddess at Rome, into which none of the male sex were permitted to enter; and he was the first who instituted those celebrated priestesses, who bore the name of Vestals, or vestal virgins.

HARRIET.

What was the employment of these priestesses?

MOTHER.

It chiefly consisted in preserving the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta; for if they suffered it to go out, all was consternation in the city, as such an accident was considered a prognostic of evil happening to the state. It was customary, however, to renew this fire, whether it had been extinguished or not, every year, in the calends of March, by means of concentrated sun-beams.

Another important office of the vestals was to guard the Palladium, which, with the household

gods and other images, Æneas had saved from the ruins of Troy, and brought with him into Italy.

At first there were only four vestals, but afterwards their number was increased to seven. It was required that they should be born of a good family, and free from any personal defect. The privileges enjoyed by these priestesses were very great; they had the most honourable seats at public games; a lictor with the fasces preceded them whenever they walked in public; they were carried in chariots wherever they pleased; they had the power of pardoning criminals when led to execution, if it appeared that their meeting had been accidental; their declarations in trials were taken without the formality of oaths; they were chosen arbiters in causes of importance; and so great was the deference paid them by the magistrates, as well as the people, that the consuls themselves made way for them; and whoever presumed to insult them was condemned to death. Any misconduct on the part of the vestals themselves, however, was punished in the most rigorous manner. Numa Pompilius ordered them to be stoned; but Tarquin condemned them to be buried alive, placing them in a subterranean cavity, and leaving them there to perish with hunger.

HARRIET.

I hope none suffered such lingering torments.

MOTHER.

It appears that very few were found guilty, as in the space of a thousand years eighteen only suffered death.

HARRIET.

Were these virgins devoted to the goddess for life, or only for a limited period?

MOTHER.

The term of their priesthood lasted thirty years, after which time they were free from their vows, and at liberty to marry. They were chosen between the age of six and ten years: the first ten years were spent in learning the duties of their order, the ten following in discharging them, and the last ten in instructing such as had entered the noviciate.

HARRIET.

How long did this order of priestesses last?

MOTHER.

It was abolished by Theodosius the Great, and the fire of Vesta was then extinguished for ever. At the festivals called the Vestalia, in honour of Vesta, which were held at Rome, banquets were prepared before the doors of the houses, from which meat was sent to the vestals to offer to the gods. During this feast the millstones of the city were decked

with garlands, as well as the asses that turned them ; and ladies walked barefoot in procession to the temple of the goddess. Vesta is represented as wearing a long flowing robe, with a veil on her head, holding a lamp in one hand, and in the other a javelin, or sometimes a palladium.

Venus was known among the eastern nations under the names of Urania and Astarte. The Greeks and Romans called her Aphrodite and Marina, in allusion to her supposed origin from the foam of the sea : she was also styled Cypria, from the island of Cyprus ; Idalia, from a mountain in Idalia ; Erycinia, from mount Eryx in Sicily ; Paphia, from Paphos ; and Cythera, from having been first wafted by the zephyrs to an island of that name. It was here that she was received and educated by the Hours, the daughters of Jupiter, who afterwards conveyed her to heaven, where she became the wife of Vulcan. She was the goddess of beauty and love ; and was regarded as the mistress, and by some as the mother of the Graces.

HARRIET,

Were not her charms the cause of much jealousy in heaven ?

MOTHER.

Yes ; I dare say you have read how the goddess Discord, incensed at not having been invited to

a banquet of the gods at the marriage of Peleus king of Thessaly, and Thetis a marine divinity, disturbed the harmony above by throwing a golden apple among the goddesses, inscribed, "To the most beautiful." The gods appointed Paris, prince of Troy, the arbiter, who adjudged the prize to Venus.

The worship of Venus was almost universal: in some places incense only was consumed upon her altars, in others, a white goat was sacrificed, and women also frequently consecrated their hair to her, which gave rise to a fable that you may perhaps be already acquainted with: Berenice, queen of Egypt, in the hope of obtaining success for her husband in war, devoted her hair in the temple of Venus, and because it unaccountably disappeared, the soothsayers flattered her vanity by saying that it was changed into a constellation that had been just discovered, and which consequently was called Berenice's lock.

HARRIET.

I have seen paintings of Venus seated in a shell floating on the sea.

MOTHER.

She is often represented in this manner, and then she is usually surrounded by nereids or sea nymphs, and dolphins. Sometimes she appears in a chariot drawn by doves, or swans, accompa-

nied by her son Cupid, and the Graces ; her waist encircled by the Cestus, a mysterious girdle which was imagined to inspire irresistible affection in all who beheld it.

Cupid was the god of love, and was worshipped with the same solemnity as his mother. He is described by the poets as a beautiful winged boy, with a bow and arrows, wearing a bandage over his eyes to denote the blindness of love ; sometimes he appears mounted on a dolphin, and sometimes breaking the thunderbolts of Jupiter.

HARRIET.

I think I recollect having seen a very pretty representation of Cupid playing upon a lyre seated on the back of a lion, which turns its head as if pleased with the sounds.

MOTHER.

He has been depicted by painters, sculptors, and poets, in many fanciful ways. He had a wife named Psyche, from a Greek word signifying spirit, who is represented with the wings of a butterfly, to intimate the airy nature of the soul, of which that insect was the symbol.

HARRIET.

Had the Graces any other office beside that of attending on Venus ?

MOTHER.

They were believed to bestow attractive charms on beauty, and to dispense the power of pleasing. They presided over friendship and gratitude, and many cities in Greece raised temples to them. There were three Graces: their names were Aglaia, Thalia, Euphrosyne; some writers add a fourth, Pasithea; they were always attired in light robes, and crowned with flowers, ears of corn, grasses, and olive branches. The swan and the dove were sacred to Venus, and so were the myrtle and the rose. The colour of the rose was said to have been originally white; but when the goddess was hastening to Adonis, a beautiful youth, who was dying of wounds inflicted by a wild boar in hunting, a thorn pricked her foot, and the blood that flowed from it changed the colour of the flower to red. Venus greatly bewailed the death of Adonis her favourite, and caused a flower to spring from his blood which has been since called the Anemone; she, however, prevailed upon Jupiter to restore Adonis to life for six months during the year, and festivals were appointed in Greece, Phœnicia, and other countries, to commemorate this circumstance. These solemnities lasted several days: the first part of the time was spent in lamentations for the loss of Adonis, and the latter in rejoicings for his restoration.

CONVERSATION X.

THE SELECT GODS, CÆLUS, TERRA, SATURN, CYBELE,
LUNA, SOL, BACCHUS, ORCUS, OR PLUTO.

MOTHER.

YOU remember that the superior order of divinities was divided into two classes, the first of which consisted of the council of Jupiter. Can you tell me the names of those deities which formed the second class, and who were called the select Gods?

HARRIET.

They were Cælus, Terra, Saturn, Cybele, Luna, Sol, Bacchus, and Orcus or Pluto.

MOTHER.

You have heard all that is necessary of Cælus, Terra, Saturn, and Cybele.

The goddess Luna was, by some mythologists, styled the daughter of Hyperion and Terra, and by others regarded the same as Diana, who, you are aware, was known under three different characters;

as a celestial, a terrestrial, and an infernal divinity. Under the first of these, she was confounded with Luna, whose worship was attended with many superstitious forms and ceremonies.

It was supposed that magicians and enchanters, particularly those of Thessaly, had the power to draw her down from heaven by the force of their incantations. According to their opinion, her eclipses proceeded from thence, and on that account it was usual to beat drums and cymbals, to render the power of magic less effectual.

Sol was confounded with Apollo, in the same manner as Luna with Diana, though ancient monuments shew that they should be distinguished from each other. Sol ruled over the seasons of the year, attended by the months and hours: he was represented as riding in a chariot drawn by four horses, named Eous, Pyrois, Ethon, and Phlegon. The Sun had many children, but the most celebrated were Aurora, Circe, and Phaeton. The daily office of Aurora was to open the gates of heaven, to precede her father, and to announce his return: she petitioned the gods to bestow immortality on her husband Tithonus; but, forgetting to request perpetual youth for him at the same time, he became burdened with the infirmities of age, and therefore desired permission to die: this may be viewed as an allegory to shew the imprudence of many of our blind wishes.

HARRIET.

What was the history of Circe?

MOTHER.

She was a most skilful sorceress, and having been banished from her country for poisoning her husband, who was king of the Sarmatians, she fled into Italy, and established herself on the promontory Circæum, where she pursued her wicked practices. Through jealousy she turned the nymph Scylla first into a sea-monster ; afterwards into a cluster of rocks, and it was said that she changed men into beasts, and drew down stars from heaven through her powerful incantations.

The transformation of the companions of Ulysses, by this goddess, is thus described by Homer in the 10th Book of the Odyssey. — (Pope's translation.)

“ The goddess, rising, asks her guests to stay,
Who blindly follow where she leads the way ;
On thrones around, with downy cov’rings graced,
With semblance fair, the unhappy men she placed,
Milk newly press’d, the sacred flour of wheat,
And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat :
But venom’d was the bread, and mix’d the bowl,
With drugs of force to darken all the soul :
Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
And drank oblivion of their native coast.
Instant the circling wand the goddess waves,
To hogs transforms them, and the sty receives :

No more was seen the human form divine,
Head, face, and members, bristle into swine ;
Still cursed with sense their minds remain alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
Meanwhile the goddess with disdain bestows
The mast and acorn, brutal food, and strews
The fruit of cornel as their feast around."

The fate of the rash youth Phaeton is so well known, that I think you must be acquainted with it.

HARRIET.

He prevailed upon his father to allow him to drive the chariot of light ; the horses, aware of the inexperience of the charioteer, quitted the right track, which set the universe on fire, and Jupiter, to prevent its total destruction, slew the unhappy Phaeton with a thunderbolt, and hurled him into the river Po.

MOTHER.

And here you may read Ovid's description of his fall.

HARRIET.

" Jove call'd to witness every power above,
And e'en the god whose son the chariot drove,
That what he acts he is compell'd to do,
Or universal ruin must ensue.
Straight he ascends the high ethereal throne,
Whence fierce he us'd to dart his thunder down,
Whence his dread show'rs and storms he us'd to pour,
Then aiming at the youth, with lifted hand

Full at his head he hurl'd the flaming brand
In awful thunderings : —
At once from life and from the chariot driven,
The ambitious boy fell thunder-struck from heaven,
The coursers started with a sudden bound,
And flung the reins and chariot to the ground,
The studded harness from their neck they broke,
Here fell a wheel, and here a silver spoke,
Here the bright beam, and axle tore away,
And scatter'd o'er the earth the shining fragments lay:
The breathless Phaeton, with flaming hair,
Shot from his chariot like a falling star ;
Till on the Po his blasted corpse was hurl'd,
Far from his country in the western world."

MOTHER.

The sisters of Phaeton were called the Heliades ; they wept so much for his loss, that the gods in pity changed them into poplars, and their tears became amber ; his friend Cynus also died of grief, and was metamorphosed into a swan.

Some writers imagined Bacchus to have been a deified prince, or warrior ; and others, that he was the same as Moses, for many things in the fable of the one seem derived from the history of the other. We need not enter into these traditions, but content ourselves with the notion most generally received, that he was the son of Jupiter and Semele. He was called Biformis, because he was accounted both young and old ; Brisæus from his love of grapes and honey ; Nictilius, from his feasts being celebrated in the night by torch-light ;

and Dionysius, from his father, or from the nymphs called the Nysæ, whom Jupiter entrusted with the care of his infancy. — Also, Liber, Bromius, Lyæus, from the places where he was worshipped, or from the ceremonies observed at his festival.

Bacchus was the god of wine: he taught the arts of cultivating the vine, and making wine, and the use of honey: he was thought to have greatly contributed to the civilisation of mankind, and many useful inventions were attributed to him. Silenus, the chief of the Satyrs, had the charge of his education, and remained with him as his constant companion. Bacchus married Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, king of Crete, and presented her with a crown of gold enriched by diamonds, the work of Vulcan, which after her death was placed among the constellations. Several absurd actions have been ascribed to this deity. He bestowed the fatal gift of turning every thing he touched into gold on Midas, who would have been starved to death had not the god been prevailed upon to relieve his sufferings, by telling him to wash in the river Pactolus, which ever afterwards had the reputation of possessing golden streams and golden sands.

The feasts of Bacchus were called Bacchanalia and Dionysia from his surnames, Trieterica, because they were held every third year, and Orgia from a

word signifying fury ; riotous meetings have hence been frequently termed Orgies. During these festivals, which were celebrated with great disorder, the Bacchantes, or Thyades and Mænades, priestesses of the god, were accustomed to run about with dishevelled hair, disguised in tigers' skins, bearing torches or thyrsi in their hands, intoxicated almost to madness.

HARRIET:

Yet, although from this account it would appear that these festivals did little honour either to the god, or to his votaries, I think I recollect hearing that the famous Grecian orator Demosthenes, not only spoke in favour of their celebration, but even danced among the Bacchanals.

MOTHER.

It is true that he did : after having delivered one of his celebrated harangues against Philip of Macedon, he descended from the rostrum in his embroidered robes to dance in the midst of the orchestra.

Such was the profusion of expence at these feasts, that, according to Plutarch, a naval armament cost less.

HARRIET.

What were the Thyrsi ?

MOTHER.

A Thyrsus was a javelin entwined with branches of ivy or vine leaves. The goat was sacrificed to Bacchus as an animal peculiarly destructive to the vine and the fir; the ivy, the fig, and the vine, the fir-tree, and yew-tree, were all consecrated to him. Bacchus, when represented as an old man, appears with a venerable beard; but he is often described as a young man of ruddy countenance, with horns growing from his forehead; though more frequently as an effeminate and beautiful youth, with long flowing hair, his head crowned with ivy or vine leaves, and holding the thyrsus and a cantharus, or ancient cup, in his hand. He sometimes appears in a chariot drawn by tigers, lions, lynxes or panthers, and attended by Silenus, who is generally described as riding upon an ass in a state of great intoxication.

Pluto now remains to be spoken of. I dare say you can tell me who were his parents and brothers.

HARRIET.

He was the son of Saturn and Cybele, and his brothers were Jupiter and Neptune.

MOTHER.

He was called Pluto, and Dis, signifying wealth, from the natural powers of the earth being under his direction. Hades, or gloomy; Orcus, Urgus,

or Ouragus, as hastening men to their death; Febricus, to signify the purifications which were practised in funeral rites; Summanus, the chief of the infernal deities; and the Stygian Jupiter, because thunder at night was attributed to him.

Pluto was the god of the infernal regions; his appearance was very deformed, and his dominions were so gloomy, that all the goddesses declined to marry him; but he determined to have by force what was refused to his solicitations, and therefore paid a visit to the island of Sicily, where, seeing a company of young women gathering flowers in the fields of Enna, he selected Proserpine as the most beautiful, and carried her off with him in his chariot to the regions below: there she became his beloved consort, and was styled the queen of hell, and often the infernal Juno.

HARRIET.

Were the infernal gods worshipped in the same manner as the celestial divinities?

MOTHER.

No, for they had neither temples nor altars, nor were hymns composed in their praise; and they were regarded as implacable and as objects of terror. Sacrifices were nevertheless offered to these deities, but in trenches cut in the earth for that purpose, and when the priest invoked the deity, he lowered his hands to the earth instead of raising them to

heaven; he was also dressed in black; while the priests offering to the celestial gods wore purple drapery; the victims were always black, and the bull was especially immolated to Pluto. The plants sacred to him were the cypress, the narcissus, and the maiden-hair. Pluto is sometimes represented as seated on a throne of sulphur, surrounded with gloom and darkness, of a severe and frowning countenance, and his head crowned with a diadem, a garland of cypress leaves, or a wreath of the flowers of the narcissus, the latter being particularly pleasing to the god, because Proserpine was gathering them when he stole her away: in his hand he holds, instead of a sceptre, a rod with which he guided departed spirits to hell, and also a key emblematical of the impossibility of returning from his dominions; and sometimes he is seen in a black chariot, drawn by black horses, and wearing a helmet on his head, which has the power of rendering him invisible.

The dominions of Pluto were approached by a wide dark cave, that was terminated by a poisonous lake, called Avernus. At the entrance of these gloomy regions were stationed a host of the sorrows, diseases, and crimes incident to mortals, which are described in these lines of Virgil:

HARRIET.

“ Deep was the cave, and downward as it went
From the wide mouth, a rocky rough descent,

F 5

And here th' access a gloomy grove defends,
And there th' unnavigable lake extends,
O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
No bird presumes to steer his airy flight,
Such deadly stench from the depth arise,
And steaming sulphur, which infects the skies:
Hence do the Grecian bards their legends make,
And give the name Avernus to the lake.
Just in the gate, and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful Care and sullen Sorrow dwell;
And pale diseases, and repining age,
Want, Fear, and Famine's unresisted rage.
Here Toil and Death, and death's half brother, Sleep,
(Forms terrible to view) their sentry keep.
With anxious pleasures of a guilty mind,
Deep fraud before, and open force behind:
The Furies' iron beds, and Strife that shakes
Her hissing tresses, and unfolds her snakes."

MOTHER.

Charon, a decrepit old man, was the ferryman of hell. His office was to conduct the souls of the dead to the other side of the lake Avernus; but those who had not been honoured with funeral rites, were previously condemned to wander on its solitary shores for the space of a hundred years. The spirits of the dead had still to pass four rivers, called Acheron, Cocytus, Phlegethon, and Styx, before they reached the gate leading to the palace of Pluto, which was guarded by Cerberus. When the gods swore by the river Styx, they observed their oath with the utmost scrupulosity.

HARRIET.

And who was Cerberus?

MOTHER.

A monstrous dog with three heads, one of which was constantly on the watch; his body was covered with snakes instead of hair, and he was styled the porter of hell.

Within the precincts of Pluto's dismal abode were first seen the souls of infants who had expired as soon as they were born; then the spirits of those who were put to death unjustly, or who had destroyed themselves; beyond them, wandering in myrtle groves, were the victims of love and despair; then succeeded the abodes of heroes; and not far from thence appeared the dread tribunal where the irrevocable sentence was pronounced; then Tartarus, the tremendous prison, with gates of solid brass, surrounded by three massive walls, washed by the fiery waves of the flaming Phlegethon, the stagnant marshes of the Cocytus, and the waters of the rivers Styx and Lethe, which last had the power of producing forgetfulness of past events in those who drank of it.

HARRIET.

Who were the judges in hell?

MOTHER.

Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æacus, the sons of Jupiter, who were appointed to this office for the

prudence, discretion, and justice they had exercised on earth, when judges in the island of Crete.

Guilty mortals, after sentence had been pronounced upon them, were delivered over to the Furies, who pursued the offenders with burning torches.

HARRIET.

How many Furies were there?

MOTHER.

Three: Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megara, the daughters of Acheron and Nox; their names signify Rage, Slaughter, and Envy: but they were also styled Diræ, Erinnyes, the disturbers of the mind; and Eumenides, or the mild, when they had ceased to persecute Orestes for putting his mother to death. They were represented with the faces of women, their heads covered with snakes instead of hair, attired in funeral robes, which were bound round their waists with girdles of snakes, and they held torches in their hands, and whips composed of serpents or scorpions. They were worshipped almost universally, in the hope of averting their vengeance. At Athens, a festival was held in their honour once every year.

The Fates, or Parcæ, for so they were called in Latin, had their abode also in these gloomy regions; they were the daughters of Necessity, and were called Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. They

are described as three females bending under the weight of years, and were supposed to spin and cut the thread of human life; the office of Clotho was to draw the thread, while Lachesis turned the wheel, and Atropos cut the thread with her fatal shears. The happy days were spun of gold and silver, but those of sorrow were of black worsted.

HARRIET.

Is there any account of the criminals who suffered in the infernal regions?

MOTHER.

Yes: the most remarkable were some of the Titans, who were precipitated from heaven for having made war against Jupiter and the gods; their names were Atlas, Briareus, Gyges, Japitus, and Oceanus.

Sisyphus, for having attempted to deceive Pluto, was condemned to the never-ceasing labour of rolling an enormous rock up to the summit of a steep mountain.

Phlegyas, a son of Mars, was doomed to the constant terror of seeing a stone suspended over his head, perpetually threatening to fall, and crush him beneath its weight.

The giant Tityus, a son of Jupiter, was slain by the arrow of Apollo, for having presumed to offend Diana, and afterwards was thrown into Tartarus, where vultures unceasingly preyed upon his liver, which was as constantly renewed.

Ixion, for venturing to rival Jupiter, was bound to a wheel, which was surrounded by serpents, and continually turning over a river of fire.

The fate of Tantalus, who, for savagely murdering his son Pelops, and serving him up to a banquet of the gods, was condemned to perpetual hunger and thirst, has become quite proverbial; and his sufferings were aggravated by being constantly surrounded with water and delicious food, without the power of attaining either. Here is an account of his miserable condition.

HARRIET.

" There Tantalus, along the Stygian bound,
Pours out deep groans, his groans thro' hell resound;
E'en in the circling floods, refreshment craves,
And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves.
When to the water he his lip applies,
Back from his lip the treacherous water flies.
Above, beneath, around his hapless head,
Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread;
The fruit he strives to seize, but blasts arise,
Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies."

MOTHER.

The daughters of Danaus, who were fifty in number, all, with the exception of one, at the command of their cruel father, killed their husbands; and for this crime the forty-nine were sentenced to the continual toil of filling bottomless vessels with water.

HARRIET.

And where were the virtuous spirits rewarded?

MOTHER.

In a part of the dominions of Pluto called Elysium, or the Elysian fields; a spot, adorned with all the beauties of nature, where the inhabitants were employed in those pursuits and gratifications which pleased them during life. Virgil describes this happy abode in these lines :

HARRIET.

“ These rites complete, they reach the flow’ry plains,
The verdant groves, where pleasure endless reigns :
Here glowing æther shoots a purple ray,
And o’er the region pours a double day ;
From sky to sky, th’ unwearied splendour runs,
And nobler planets roll round brighter suns ;
Some wrestle on the sands, and some in play
And games heroic pass the hours away.
Those raise the song divine, and these advance
In measur’d steps to form the solemn dance ;
Others beneath a laurel grove were laid,
And joyful feasted in the pageant shade.”

MOTHER.

It may be well to mention here the principal infernal divinities, though they properly belong to the second order.

Nemesis was a goddess who presided over the punishment of guilt. She is represented as traversing the earth with great diligence in search of the wicked; furnished with wings, a helmet, and a

Panic. He invented a pipe, and called it *Syrinx*, in honour of a nymph of whom he was enamoured, and who had avoided his pursuit by flying to her father, the river *Ladon*, who metamorphosed her into a bundle of reeds. Pan, observing that these reeds emitted a pleasing sound, formed them into a musical instrument, with which he had the power of charming even the gods. He was afterwards in love with the nymphs *Echo* and *Pithys*; but was rejected by *Echo* in favour of *Narcissus*, a beautiful youth, who was so captivated with his own image, which he saw, reflected in a fountain, that he remained gazing at it until he languished and died. *Echo*, in consequence, pined with grief, but being immortal, preserved her voice, which she has since employed in repeating every sound that reaches her. The nymph *Pithys* was more favourable to the god; but *Boreas*, jealous of this preference, precipitated her from a rock, and, while she was falling, changed her into a pine, which was afterwards sacred to Pan.

The festivals which were observed in honour of this god in Greece, were called the *Lycæa*, and *Evander* introduced them into Rome, where they were celebrated every year under the name of the *Lupercalia*. The priests of Pan were called the *Luperci*. The dog and the goat were the victims sacrificed to Pan; and milk and honey were likewise offered to him.

Pan is usually represented under the figure of a satyr, holding a syrinx in his hand. Pan was one of the eight great gods of the Egyptians, where he was worshipped with the greatest solemnity.

HARRIET.

You mentioned satyrs a few evenings ago, but you did not say what they were.

MOTHER.

Satyr, Faun, and Egipan, were names indifferently given to the same rural divinities, but their origin was unknown; they were always described with the upper part of their figures resembling that of a man, with horns on the head, and the lower part that of a goat.

Silenus, the companion of Bacchus, was sometimes considered as the son of Pan; he was the chief of the satyrs, who honoured him as their father, and who were called Sileni when they became old.

Silvanus presided over the woods; his form was that of a satyr, and in his hand he carried a branch of cypress in memory of Cyparissus, a youth of whom he had been very fond, and who, upon his death, had been changed by the god into a cypress-tree.

Priapus, the god of gardens, was the son of Venus and Bacchus, and was worshipped by the

eastern nations under the name of Baal Peor. His image, a hideous and mishapen figure, was employed in gardens to frighten away birds and thieves.

Vertumnus presided over spring and orchards. He was represented as a young man crowned with flowers, holding fruit in one hand, and a cornucopia, or a horn of plenty, in the other.

Terminus, also, was highly revered in the city of Rome : he presided over boundaries, and was worshipped under the form of a square stone or a log of planed wood, which was usually perfumed with ointment, and crowned with garlands. Land-marks themselves, which were called lapides terminales, were esteemed so sacred, that whoever attempted to move them was liable to be put to death ; and a festival, called the Terminalia, was observed to their honour on the last day of the year, when offerings were made to them of the first fruits of the earth.

Pales, Flora, and Pomona, were the most important of the rural goddesses. The first of these presided over shepherds and pastimes ; and the Romans honoured her by observing a yearly festival, called Palilia or Parilia, in the hope of rendering her propitious to their flocks. During this feast the Romans commemorated the foundation of their city.

Flora, who was called Chloris by the Greeks,

the wife of Zephyrus, was the goddess of flowers. She appeared under the figure of a beautiful woman, crowned with flowers, and at Rome games were annually celebrated to her, which were called the Floralia.

Pomona, the wife of Vertumnus, was the goddess of fruits. Her supposed skill in cultivating fruit-trees and gardens procured her great reputation from the Romans, and her statue had a place in the Pantheon. She is represented as a beautiful female seated upon a basket of fruits, attended by her husband.

HARRIET.

Was the Pantheon a heathen temple?

MOTHER.

Yes, a very celebrated one; it was built by Agrippa, in the reign of Augustus, and dedicated to all the gods. It was converted into a place of Christian worship so early as the beginning of the fourth century, and as such it still exists.

The Nymphs also, whom I forgot to name in my summary, belonged to the second order of divinities: they were distributed into three classes, the celestial, the terrestrial, and the marine; the first were employed in attendance upon the gods, who had each a company appropriated to them.

You know who the nymphs of Apollo were?

HARRIET.

They were the nine muses.

MOTHER.

The terrestrial nymphs presiding over the woods were called Dryades, and Hamadryades; those of the mountains, Orcades, or Orestiades; of the valleys and groves, the Napææ; of the meadows and fields, Limoniades; and some nymphs were called Mesîæ, from the ash-tree, which was sacred to them.

The marine nymphs were styled Oceanides, Nereids, or Nerinæ; those of the fountains, Nàiades; and of the rivers, Fluviales; and such as presided over ponds and lakes were called Lymniades.

HARRIET.

Were these nymphs honoured, like other divinities, with worship and sacrifice?

MOTHER.

Yes; but solemnity did not attend their service, and no temples were erected to them. The fruits of the earth were the offerings they usually received, to which was sometimes added the sacrifice of a goat. The Nymphs are represented as beautiful young women, partly veiled, holding a vase in their hands, from which they appear to be pouring water.

Among the divinities, termed gods of inferior nations, Plutus, the god of riches, held a distinguished place: he was the son of Ceres and Jason, and was represented blind, to denote that his gifts were dispensed indifferently to the good and the bad; and he had wings, to imply the swiftness of their flight.

Janus has been already alluded to; he was by some styled the son of Cœlus and Terra, and you recollect was regarded as the god of the year.

HARRIET.

Yes, and I think you told me that twelve altars were dedicated to him, according to the number of the months.

MOTHER.

True, and it also appears that the consuls at Rome were inaugurated in the temple of Janus; and that, on the calends of January, which was named after this god, it was customary to hang a new laurel upon his statue, which Ovid refers to in these lines:—

“ The laurel that the former year did grace,
To a fresh and verdant garland yields his place.”

Eolus, the son of Jupiter, was the god of winds and tempests, which he was supposed to hold confined in a vast cave, or set at liberty of his own will, or that of his father. The four winds were his children: the north wind was named Boreas; the

south, Auster, or Notus; the east, Eurus; and the west wind, Zephyrus. The description Virgil has given of this god is so poetical, that I should like you to read it: —

HARRIET.

“ There, in a spacious cave of living stone,
The tyrant Æolus, from his airy throne,
With pow’r imperial curbs the struggling winds,
And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds.
This way and that, th’ impatient captives tend,
And, pressing for release, the mountains rend:
High in his hall th’ undaunted monarch stands,
And shakes his sceptre, and their rage commands;
Which did he not, their unresisted sway
Would sweep the world before them in their way:
Earth, air, and seas through empty space would roll,
And heaven would fly before the driving soul.
In fear of this, the father of the gods,
Confined their fury to these dark abodes,
And lock’d them safe, oppress’d with mountain loads,
Impos’d a king with arbitrary sway,
To loose their fetters, or their force allay.”

MOTHER.

Somnus and Nox I have already spoken of in treating of the infernal divinities.

Latona was the protectress of children.

Momus and Comus were two divinities very similar in their character and office. The first was the god of raillery and repartee; he is generally represented as raising a mask from his face, and holding a small figure in his hand, and he was

said to have been banished from heaven for the too great freedom of his remarks upon the gods.

Comus presided over entertainments and the pleasures of the table, and was described under the figure of a young man in a state of intoxication, wearing on his head a garland of flowers, and holding in his hand a torch that appears ready to fall.

Hebe, the daughter of Jupiter and Juno, was the goddess of youth; she was worshipped at Rome under the name of Juventas, and represented as a young woman crowned with flowers, and arrayed in a variegated garment.

HARRIET.

Was not Hebe cupbearer to the gods?

MOTHER.

Yes; she filled that office until, happening to offend Jupiter, she was dismissed from it, and Ganymede, son of Tros, king of Troy, was appointed to succeed her.

The Lares and Penates, the household divinities, were considered as the guardians of houses and families. It was at the option of every master of a family to choose his Penates; therefore Jupiter, and many superior divinities, were invoked as patrons of domestic concerns. The souls of those who had faithfully served the state, and the spirits

of departed friends and relatives, were also ranked amongst them.

HARRIET.

Under what figure were they worshipped?

MOTHER.

Small images of the human form represented these deities. Lamps were consecrated to them, as symbols of vigilance, and the dog, as being a most faithful domestic animal, was their sacrifice. At the public feasts of these Lares and Penates, waxen images were suspended in the streets, upon which they were intreated, if offended, to lay alone the weight of their displeasure.

The Roman youths used to wear a golden ornament round their necks, called the bulla, until they were fourteen years old, when it was consecrated to the household divinities.

Although the Genii, and the Lares sometimes mean the same deities, yet by genius was commonly meant that spirit of nature which produces all things; or, a nameless deity that from birth presided over each individual. — Countries and cities had also their peculiar protecting genius. It was customary on birth-days to offer wine, flour, and incense to these genii; and sometimes parched bread and corn, strewed with salt. The images of the genii resembled, for the most part, the form of a serpent. Sometimes also they were

described under the figure of a boy or girl, or an old man; and crowned with the leaves of the plane tree, which was sacred to them.

HARRIET.

What is the difference between the Lares and the Penates?

MOTHER.

Those titles seem to have been applied indiscriminately — at least, I have never met with any satisfactory data by which I could distinguish them.

CONVERSATION XII.

GODS OF THE THIRD ORDER, THE DEMIGODS,
AND HEROES.

MOTHER.

THE subject of our conversation this evening will be the third order of divinities, which you remember consisted of the demigods and heroes.

HARRIET.

Were there many of this order?

MOTHER.

A very great number ; it would, in fact, be impossible to give you even the names of all those whom the Greeks and Romans regarded as divinities, or dignified with distinguished honours. It appears that, notwithstanding their very subordinate rank, a high degree of worship was paid to their memory ; temples, statues, and colleges of priests were consecrated to them.

Among the earliest of these deified princes were Inachus, Cecrops, Deucalion, Pelops, and Cadmus ; they were all leaders of colonies into Greece, from various parts of the East, and became the founders of the different Grecian states.

About eighteen hundred years before Christ, Inachus founded the kingdom of Argos, over which he reigned, and of which he was regarded as the tutelar deity.

Cecrops, a native of Sais in Egypt, led a colony into Attica, about fifteen hundred years before the Christian era. He was the founder of Athens, and was said to have introduced the worship of some of the Egyptian deities.

Deucalion, king of Thessaly, was remarkable for his piety and virtues: he was supposed to have lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ, and the deluge, so celebrated in ancient history, is said to have taken place in his reign.

HARRIET.

Did not Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha survive that deluge?

MOTHER.

It is said that they did so, by taking refuge on the top of Mount Parnassus until the waters had subsided.

HARRIET.

Was not the earth replenished by Deucalion and Pyrrha?

MOTHER.

Yes; having consulted the oracle of Themis, they threw stones behind them, of which, those thrown

by Deucalion became men, and those by Pyrrha, women.

Cadmus, the founder of the kingdom of Thebes, lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ. He had the reputation of introducing the use of letters into Greece, and is said to have been the first who consecrated statues to the gods in that country.

Pelops was a very celebrated prince, and was revered above all the other heroes in Greece; from him the Peninsula, of which he was one of the monarchs, received the name of Peloponnesus.

Romulus, founder of Rome, whilst giving instructions to his senators during an eclipse disappeared, and was supposed to have been translated to heaven.

Jasôn, king of Thessaly, was a renowned hero of antiquity, and the leader of the expedition of the golden fleece, so celebrated in ancient history.

HARRIET.

What was the object of that expedition?

MOTHER.

No event recorded in the history of Greece has more of mystery attaching to it than this: as far as can be inferred, however, from the various accounts given of it, it appears to have been a military enterprise, undertaken by the most illustrious warriors of Greece, in order to recover some

treasures which had been carried away from their country to Colchis, and at the same time to establish a maritime commerce and form new colonies in those countries which they should visit. Poetic fiction represented this treasure as a ram with a golden fleece, and the dangers attending its conquest as formidable monsters guarding it. The period at which this expedition was undertaken is so remote that it is impossible to ascertain it with any degree of truth: some writers have imagined it to have taken place thirty years before the Trojan war, which would be about twelve hundred years before the Christian era. But to return to Jason; he succeeded in regaining the prize, and afterwards married Medea, the daughter of Aeta, king of Colchis, by whose magical arts he was said to have been assisted.

Jason was accompanied in this expedition by the Argonauts, the most illustrious heroes of Greece, amongst whom were Hercules, Orpheus, Castor, and Pollux.

HARRIET.

Why were they called Argonauts?

MOTHER.

From Argo, the name of the ship in which they sailed. The most famous of the companions of Jason was Hercules, the reputed son of Jupiter and Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon, king of

Thebes; he was called Alcides from his great strength, and Hercules from the glory which Juno caused him; for through her jealousy she exposed him to the greatest dangers, and imposed upon him the severest labours, which only rendered him the more illustrious.

HARRIET.

We often read of the labours of Hercules: What were they?

MOTHER.

Hercules performed an infinite number of memorable actions, but twelve are especially celebrated.

1. He killed an enormous lion in the forest of Nemea, whose skin he afterwards wore.

2. He destroyed the Hydra, a dreadful serpent with seven heads.

3. He bound the Erymanthean boar, an animal of astonishing fierceness.

4. He hunted down a hind that was consecrated to Diana, whose horns were of gold, and whose feet were of brass.

5. He killed the Stympthalides, birds which fed upon human flesh.

6. He defeated the Amazons, a nation of warlike women, and took Hippolite their queen prisoner.

7. He cleansed the stable of king Augeus, which

had not been done for thirty years, and this he did by turning a river into it.

8. He tamed a furious bull that did great mischief in Crete.

9. He vanquished Diomedes, a tyrant of Thrace, who fed his horses with the flesh of his guests.

10. He slew Geryon, king of Spain, a cruel giant with three bodies.

11. He dragged to the light of day Cerberus, the triple-headed dog of the infernal regions.

12. And he destroyed the tremendous dragon that guarded the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides.

HARRIET.

Who were the Hesperides?

MOTHER.

Three celebrated nymphs, daughters of Hesperus, an ancient king of Italy; they were appointed to guard the golden apples which Juno gave to Jupiter on the day of their nuptials.

HARRIET.

What was the fate of Hercules?

MOTHER.

He burnt himself to death on a funeral pile, that he had himself raised, when he was driven to distraction by the agony he suffered from a

garment poisoned by the blood of the Lernean Hydra.

Orpheus was a celebrated poet and musician, said to be the son of Apollo and the muse Calliope. His skill was so great that he was believed to have the power of charming not only men, but beasts, and the very stones themselves, with the sweet magic of his lyre, which after his death was translated to heaven, and became a constellation. Orpheus visited the infernal regions, in order to recover his wife Eurydice who had been killed by a serpent, and by the melody of his strains he prevailed upon Pluto and Proserpine to restore her to him, provided he should abstain from looking at her, till they had both returned to earth again; but Orpheus being unable to perform this condition, Eurydice was taken from him again, and he gave himself up to a life of solitude, bewailing her loss to the music of his lyre.

The two heroes, Castor and Pollux, were twin brothers, generally called the sons of Jupiter and Leda; they were said to have been both translated to heaven, where they formed the constellation which is called Gemini. A temple was dedicated to them in the Forum of Rome, for it was believed that they had assisted the Romans in a battle against the Latins, when they appeared mounted on white horses, furiously attacking the enemy.

The ancients were accustomed to swear by the divinity of these heroes.

The chiefs who distinguished themselves in the Theban and Trojan wars were also highly respected, if not worshipped, by the heathen world.

The heroes of Thebes were Eteocles, Polynices, Adrastus, Tydeus, Capaneus, Amphiaraus, and Hippomedon: those of Troy were Achilles, Nestor, Ulysses, Diomed, Hector, Paris, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Ajax.

Theseus, king of Athens, who lived about twelve hundred years before Christ, was a celebrated hero of antiquity, whose actions were so famous, that he was accounted another Hercules. He killed the Minotaur, a monster, part of whose body resembled that of a man, and part that of a bull; he vanquished the Thebans; he defeated the Amazons; he overcame the Centaurs, a people of Thessaly who were partly men and partly horses, and he descended to hell, and returned to the world again. He slew the tyrant Procrustes, who used to extend the limbs of all that fell into his power upon an iron bed: — if they were too long, he cut them off; if too short, he stretched them till he dislocated all the joints. Great honours were paid to the memory of this hero; and festivals and games were publicly instituted to commemorate the actions of one who had been so useful to the people of Athens.

HARRIET.

Was there not a particular privilege annexed to the temple of Theseus at Athens ?

MOTHER.

Yes ; if slaves, or others of mean condition who were oppressed either by their masters or men in power, fled to it, they were protected. — But Theseus was not the only divinity whose temple constituted an asylum : — The temple of Diana protected debtors ; that of Mercury, thieves ; and, as I ought to have told you before, the altars, temples, or statues of the deities generally conferred safety and protection to different individuals or classes, over whose occupations or offences such god or goddess presided.

The exploits of Perseus were equally marvellous. He was regarded as the son of Jupiter, and the founder of the city of Mycenæ in Peloponnesus, and was thought to have been particularly favoured by the gods. Mercury presented him with a scythe of adamant, and with wings which he attached to his feet. Pluto bestowed a helmet upon him, and Minerva gave him a shield of polished brass.

HARRIET.

What wonderful actions were attributed to this hero ?

MOTHER.

He delivered Andromeda, the daughter of Ce-

pheus, king of Ethiopia, from a sea monster that was about to devour her, and he afterwards made her his wife; he and Andromeda, with her mother Cassiopeia, were at their death placed among the constellations: he encountered Medusa the princess of the Gorgons, and, by the assistance of Minerva, struck off her head, and fixed it on his shield, where it had the power of turning into stone all those that beheld it. Atlas was turned by the sight of it into the mountain of that name in Mauritania, because he once rudely refused to receive and entertain Perseus as his guest. Do you recollect what sprung from the blood which fell on the ground when Medusa's head was cut off?

HARRIET.

Yes; the winged horse Pegasus.

MOTHER.

It was by the assistance of Pegasus that Bellerophon, a prince remarkable for his courage and virtue, was said to have obtained his celebrated victory over Chimera, a dreadful monster, represented as vomiting fire, having the head and breast of a lion, and the tail of a serpent. This has been thought to be a fiction to denote a volcanic mountain that was infested by wild beasts, which Bellerophon overcame, and thus rendered habitable. Bellerophon was the first who taught the art of

training horses, and hence he was often called Hipponus.

Of Atlas, whom I have already alluded to, something more should be said. He was the son of Japetus, a Titan prince, and the brother of Prometheus ; having been forewarned that he should be ruined by one of the sons of Jupiter, he resolved never to receive strangers, which led to the sad fate that befel him. The poets describe him as supporting the heavens on his shoulders, and tell us that seven of his daughters, called the Pleiades, and seven others, who were named the Hyades, were turned into as many stars.

Hesperus, the brother of Atlas, was worshipped as a god, and a bright star was called Hesperus, or Hesper, from his name. It is the evening star when it sets after the sun; but when it rises before the sun it is called Lucifer, or the morning-star. Hesperus had three daughters, who, in general, were styled the Hesperides, of whom you have already heard.

Concerning Prometheus, of whom we incidentally spoke in a former conversation, I have nothing more to add.

Dædalus, an Athenian, a descendant of Eri-thous, king of Athens, was held in high estimation as the author of many useful inventions: the wedge, the axe, the lever, were attributed to him, and he is said to have been the first who taught the use

of sails. He built an edifice called the Labyrinth, within which the Minotaur was confined, for Minos king of Crete, of such a curious construction, that a person once placed within it could not find his way out again without a clue. Theseus, however, was enabled by Ariadne, daughter of Minos, to make his escape.

Esculapius, who, from his great skill in medicine, received divine honours after his death, now only remains to be mentioned. He was regarded as the son of Apollo and the nymph Coronis, and was said to have been educated by the centaur Chiron. In speaking of Apollo I alluded to the fate of Esculapius.

HARRIET.

He was said to have been slain by one of the thunderbolts of Jupiter, because, by his medical skill, he deprived Pluto of his subjects.

MOTHER.

When Rome was delivered from the plague, a temple was built to this god of medicine, who, it was supposed, had come there in the form of a serpent, and concealed himself among the reeds, on an island in the Tiber. The serpent, as the emblem of prudence, and the cock, as that of vigilance, were sacred to Esculapius.

CONVERSATION XIII.

GODS OF THE FOURTH ORDER.

MOTHER.

YOU recollect what were the divinities of the fourth and last order of gods ?

HARRIET.

The physical, moral, and intellectual qualities, as well as the miseries, blessings, or accidents of life.

MOTHER.

The ancients not only worshipped the several species of virtue, but Virtue herself, whom they esteemed as a goddess, and adored under the form of an elderly matron, seated on a square stone. Near the temple of this divinity was one dedicated to Honour, toward which the temple of Virtue was made the necessary passage, to imply that by means of virtue alone true honour could be attained.

Truth was supposed to be the mother of Virtue, and was represented as a young woman of a serene and cheerful countenance, covered with a robe as white as snow.

Numa Pompilius was said to have been the first who consecrated a temple to Fidelity. The symbols of this goddess were a white dog and two hands united; and the most inviolable oaths were taken in her name.

Hope had several temples at Rome. She was represented sometimes as bearing in her hands a horn of plenty, flowers, or a bee-hive, and sometimes as leaning upon an anchor.

Prudence was known by her rule pointing to a globe at her feet; and Temperance by the bridle she held in her hand.

Fortitude was described as leaning against a sword.

Honesty was clad in a transparent vest; and Modesty was represented as a veiled female.

Every species of Piety received divine honours: a temple was built to Filial Piety at Rome, on the foundation of the house where the Roman lady had dwelt who had nourished her father in prison.

Altars were raised to Compassion, which were regarded as a refuge for the miserable and unfortunate. The Romans gave to these temples the name of Asylums.

Concord and Peace were esteemed two distinct goddesses.

HARRIET.

How are they supposed to differ?

MOTHER.

The authority of Concord was thought to extend over houses, families, and cities, whilst that of Peace was exercised over empires. Concord was described as holding a bowl in her right hand, and in her left a horn of plenty, or a sceptre, from which fruit seemed to sprout forth. Peace was represented under the form of a matron, crowned with olives and laurel, and holding ears of corn in her hand. Her particular symbol was a caduceus, or a white staff, which was borne by ambassadors, when they went on a treaty of peace. This goddess had a magnificent temple dedicated to her in the Forum at Rome, in which were deposited the treasures taken from the city of Jerusalem.

Tranquillity was also separately worshipped, and represented as a female leaning against a column.

Eternity had neither temples nor altars. She was represented sometimes under the figure of an aged woman, bearing an inscription importing her name; sometimes under the form of a phoenix, an imaginary bird, which receives new life from its own ashes; sometimes under that of a globe, because it has no limits; and frequently as a serpent, which, by joining its extremities, forms a circle, which is an emblem of Eternity.

Providence was represented as a woman leaning on a pillar, holding in her left hand a horn of

plenty, and pointing to a globe with her right, to imply that her care extended to the whole universe.

Thought was deified, and invoked to present none but good ideas to the mind.

Time was represented under the figure of Saturn: he was painted with wings, to show the rapidity of his progress, and with a scythe in his hand, to express his destructive power.

Themis was worshipped as the goddess of justice. She was the daughter of Coelus and Terra, and was the first divinity to whom temples were erected.

HARRIET.

And Liberty, the idol of the Romans, was not she a favourite divinity?

MOTHER.

Yes; several temples were raised to her. She was represented as leaning upon a table of the laws, having a sword in her hand, with which she was prepared to defend her worshippers.

You will be surprised to learn that Health was esteemed a goddess. She was called by the Greeks Hygeia, and by the Romans Salus. She was much honoured at Rome, where several holidays were appointed for her particular service. She was described as a young woman veiled, with a serpent in one hand, and a cup in the other. The Roman matrons consecrated their hair to her.

HARRIET.

How was she represented?

MOTHER.

As a woman seated on a throne, holding a bowl in her right hand.

The Greeks honoured Felicity under the name of Eudormia or Macaria; and Lucullus raised a temple to this goddess at Rome, after the war with Mithridates and Tigranes: she was represented as a queen, seated on a throne, holding in her hand a horn of plenty, with this inscription on it:

"To the public happiness."

Among the malignant divinities, Até, or Discord, was one of the most important. A few evenings ago I told you of her having attempted to raise a dissension in heaven. Jupiter banished her from the celestial regions; after which she is said to have visited earth, where she became the source of wars, quarrels, and all domestic disputes. This goddess was described as of a ghastly countenance; her head entwined with serpents, with eyes of sparkling fire; and holding a dagger concealed in her bosom.

Envy, Calumny, and Fraud, were also esteemed goddesses.

Ovid has poetically described the first of these:

"No smiles e'er smooth'd her furrow'd brows but those
Which rise from common mischiefs, plagues, and woes;

Her eyes, mere strangers to the sweets of sleep,
Devouring spite for ever waking keep;
She sees blest men with vast enjoyment crown'd,
Their joys distract her, and their glories wound;
She kills abroad, herself consum'd at home,
And her own crimes are her perpetual doom."

HARRIET.

How were Calumny and Fraud represented?

MOTHER.

The countenance of Calumny appeared inflamed with anger, and she held a lighted torch in her hand; she was preceded by Envy, accompanied by Fraud and Conspiracy, followed by Repentance clad in mourning, who turns her head backward, as if looking for Truth, who comes slowly on.

Fraud was described with a human face, and a serpent's body, the tail of which was terminated by the sting of a scorpion.

Fury was regarded as a goddess, and usually described as bound in chains.

The vices Contumely and Impudence were adored; and it appears that they were both represented under the symbol of a partridge, which was esteemed an impudent bird.

Fortune was described as a blind woman, with wings attached to her feet, to denote her want of discrimination in bestowing her gifts, and the swiftness of their flight. An image of this god-

dess was usually kept in the apartment of the Roman emperor, and on his death was removed into that of his successor.

Temples were dedicated to Fame, who was likewise regarded as a goddess. She has been so finely described by Virgil, that you will be much pleased to read this passage.

HARRIET.

“ Fame the great ill from small beginnings grows,
 Swift from the first, and every moment brings
 New vigour to her flights, new pinions to her wings ;
 Soon grows the pigmy to gigantic size,
 Her feet on earth, her forehead in the skies ;
 Enraged against the gods, revengeful earth
 Produced her last of the Titanian birth ;
 Swift is her walk, more swift her winged haste,
 A monstrous phantom, horrible and vast ;
 As many plumes as raise her monstrous flight,
 So many piercing eyes enlarge her sight :
 Millions of opening mouths to Fame belong,
 And every mouth is furnish'd with a tongue,
 And round with list'ning ears the flying plague is rung.
 She fills the peaceful universe with cries,
 No slumbers ever close her wakeful eyes ;
 By day, from lofty towers her head she shews,
 And spreads through trembling crowds disastrous news ;
 With court informers haunts, and royal spies,
 Things done relates, not done she feigns, and mingles truth
 with lies.
 Talk is her business, and her chief delight
 To tell of prodigies, and cause affright.”

MOTHER.

Febris, Fever, had her altars and temples, and

was invoked in the hope of averting the evils she caused ; for the same reason all the other gods and goddesses of this description were worshipped.

Pavor, Fear, and Pallor, Paleness, were esteemed gods ; and it is said that when Tullus Hostilius was told that the Romans became alarmed in some battle, he dedicated a temple to these divinities.

Chastity had two temples at Rome, one called the Patrician, the other the Plebeian chastity.

Necessity and Violence had also their temple ; but it was deemed a crime to enter it.

M. Marcellus dedicated a temple to Tempestas, Tempest, after he had escaped a severe storm in a voyage to the island of Sicily.

Silence, too, had its altars ; the Romans worshipped it as a goddess, whom they called Angerona, and you recollect under what name Silence was adored by the Egyptians.

HARRIET.

Under that of Harpocrates.

You said something once about the seven wonders of the world ; will you tell me what they were ?

MOTHER.

The first was the Colossus at Rhodes, a gigantic statue of the sun, placed across the mouth of the harbour of Rhodes. Its legs were stretched

to such a distance, that a large ship could sail between them. It stood fifty years, and was at last thrown down by an earthquake.

The next was the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, which I have already described.

The Mausoleum, or Sepulchre of Mausolus, King of Caria, was the third. It was built by his queen Artemisia, and the beauty of its workmanship was as wonderful as its great size.

HARRIET.

It is, then, from this sepulchral trophy that all sumptuous monuments are called mausoleums?

MOTHER.

Precisely. When we were speaking of Jupiter, I told you of his statue by Phidias, which was the fourth wonder.

The fifth was the great wall built by queen Semiramis round the city of Babylon.

The Pyramids of Egypt, where the Egyptian kings were buried, was the sixth wonder; and the seventh was the magnificent Palace of Cyrus, King of the Medes, the stones of which are said to have been cemented with gold.

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